Revolutionary propaganda and possible counter-measures.

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REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA AND POSSIBLE COUNTER-MEASURES

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ABSTRACT

Revolutionary Propaganda and Possible Counter-Measures
by
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The thesis examines propaganda as a weapon in violent revolutionary situations. The first chapter discusses the meaning and nature of propaganda, and goes on to relate the six case studies that are to follow to the historical development of conflict propaganda. The survey notes how, as a result of dishonest usage in war and because of its totalitarian overtones, propaganda became discredited in liberal democracies, so much so that governments were reluctant even to think about it.

The six case studies deal with the propaganda aspects of the campaigns of the Assassins in medieval Persia, the Easter Rising in Dublin 1916, Zionist ambitions in Palestine after the second World War, the Algerian struggle for national independence 1954 - 62, the Provisional IRA's campaign during 1971 and early 1972, and the Dhofar rebellion that ended in 1976. The discussion that concludes each chapter summaries the role and importance of propaganda as a component of the revolutionary strategy, assesses its methods and themes, and considers the government response in this area.

The final chapter offers deductions on the nature of revolutionary propaganda and on possible counter-measures. Analysis of the case studies points to a more or less regular pattern of revolutionary propaganda from which emerge twenty themes and associated messages. Revolutionary propaganda themes are grouped into four categories - mobilisation, conflict, survival and victory. Certain distinguishing technical characteristics are identified and the role of the news media in present-day revolutionary situations is discussed.

Case analysis of government responses shows that propaganda can only be countered in kind, and that failure to counter this weapon has on several occasions undermined political and security force counter-insurgency efforts. It is dangerous for governments to ignore propaganda, and ignorance bars the way to any effective cure. In the modern liberal democracy the best course may be to educate politicians, officials, police and military in this subject, and to spread understanding to the media and general public. Dislike of propaganda *per se* is justified. The liberal regime should reject falsehood,'dirty tricks' and psychological manipulation and base its defence, its 'counter-propaganda', on truth and understanding. This would not remove the need for a lively government effort to counter revolutionary themes, and a possible form of this effort concludes this thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Whenever an abbreviation is used in the text the full title or group of words appears in the first instance, followed by the shortened form. Thereafter, the shortened form is used on its own.

In footnotes and in the bibliography the following abbreviations are used:

PRO for Public Records Office
CAB for Cabinet Office
FO for Foreign Office
CO for Colonial Office
INF for Ministry of Information
WO for War Office
MOD for Ministry of Defence
HMSO for Her (or His) Majesty's Stationery Office

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CHAPTER I

CIRCLE BEYOND CIRCLE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDIES

Aim and Method

This thesis addresses the subject of revolutionary propaganda and possible counter-measures. It is a war study aimed at improving understanding of propaganda as a weapon system in revolutionary situations. The conclusions on counter-measures relate to a liberal democracy confronted by a revolutionary threat.

The introductory chapter examines the nature of propaganda and sets the scene for the case studies that follow. In each of the six studies the evidence is sifted in an endeavour to discover the effectiveness of propaganda as a weapon for and against rebellion. It is not the writer's purpose to advance knowledge of propaganda within the disciplines of psychology, the social sciences or mass communication theory, important areas wherein much valuable academic work on the subject has already been done. Some of this work will, however, be mentioned in this chapter because it is relevant to our understanding of propaganda as a revolutionary asset.

It should be said at once that propaganda is an illusive creature, easy to talk about in vague terms but difficult to catch and hold up to the light of academic enquiry. It is rather tempting to remain in the area of generalisation, with its unfettered claims, but the writer is aware that unless claims are backed up by empirical evidence little will be accomplished beyond the airing of personal opinion, with the likelihood of increased scepticism on the part of the reader. This is one of the reasons why the case study method has been adopted for this research. The conclusions from each chapter will so far as possible be drawn from the historical evidence, and although the writer's interpretations are bound to affect judgement, the reader can also judge whether or not the facts support the deductions.

Because the case studies are directed towards a better understanding of the role and importance of propaganda in revolutionary conflict, there is a need, in the writer's belief, to see the subject in relation to the campaigns as a whole rather than in isolation. Unless this opinion is shared, the reader may object

that too much attention is paid in the studies to political and military functions. It is argued in defence of the arrangement adopted that to write a military study neglecting political factors would be considered dangerous, and vice versa. Likewise, there seems to be no way of judging the effectiveness and overall contribution of propaganda to a campaign unless the study includes at least a cursory examination of both political and military matters.

The campaigns chosen were selected from a longer list after preliminary reading had suggested that these six would yield interesting and relevant evidence. Although the aim of the thesis is to draw conclusions useful to a liberal democracy, no attempt has been made to restrict the studies to revolts inside such societies. This is because revolutionary philosophy draws little distinction between regimes that are totalitarian, authoritarian or liberal, although strategy and tactics for their overthrow may differ. Philosophically the rebel is convinced that any regime he plans to destroy is oppressive, illiberal and unjust. It is part of his task to make his followers share these beliefs. We cannot, therefore, ignore the methods used to challenge what, in some cases, were undemocratic and unjust administrations on the grounds that no parallel is likely to exist in our enlightened society, because the parallel may be created.

In the final chapter the evidence collected from the case studies is brought together for analysis, to identify any common characteristics and to attempt an assessment of the role and importance of revolutionary propaganda. In a search for possible counter-measures it will be necessary to study lessons from the government responses in the case studies and then to relate these to the conclusions reached on the nature of revolutionary propaganda *per se*.

The Meaning of Propaganda

Revulsion against public deception during World War I led Viscount Bryce later to define propaganda as 'that dissemination by the printed word of untruths and fallacies and incitements to violence'.[1] It was true that propaganda could and sometimes did fit

1. James Bryce *Modern Democracies* (London, 1921), Vol II, p 505.

this description, but the definition was nevertheless prejudiced and therefore misleading. Two years later, in 1923, Mr R J R G Wreford provided an unbiased definition: 'the dissemination of interested information and opinion'.[2] This was seen as being closer to the mark, but critics felt it to be incomplete, being limited to the spread of ideas by the use of language whether spoken or written, and excluding such wider activities as the wearing of emblems, the flying of a flag or the playing of a tune.

An alternative was offered some years later by Dr Harold D Lasswell who suggested 'the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of the significant symbols'.[3] He defined 'symbols' as 'words, or word substitutes like pictures and gestures', thus incorporating activities omitted by Wreford. Thirty-five years later Dr Terence H Qualter sought to improve Lasswell's version. He defined propaganda as 'the deliberate attempt by some individual or group to form, control, or alter the attitudes of other groups by the use of the instruments of communication, with the intention that in any given situation the reaction of those so influenced will be that desired by the propagandist'.[4] Qualter explained that by 'the instruments of communication' he meant much the same as Lasswell when he talked of 'symbols'. His definition, therefore, differs from Lasswell's in one important respect only, his final clause attributing to propaganda the disposition invariably to treat its subjects as means rather than ends, to require a 'pay off'. Qualter insisted that the goal of the propagandist was not just a change in attitudes, but a change in attitudes that resulted in action.

Reference to encyclopaedias shows that one, Chambers's, supports Qualter wholeheartedly with its 'the advancement of a belief or the creation of a state of mind to the exclusion of rival beliefs or states of mind. To this end it will principally rely upon the appeal to the instincts or the emotions (unlike education which appeals to

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2. R J R G Wreford 'Propaganda, Evil and Good', paper in The Nineteenth Century and After, Vol XCIII, 1923, pp 514-524.

3. Harold D Lasswell (i) 'The Theory of Political Propaganda', paper in American Political Science Review XXI, 1927, p 627.

4. Terrence Qualter Propaganda and Psychological Warfare (New York, 1962) p 27.

reason). Its object will always be the immediate or eventual production of some action on the part of its subjects'.[5] Another, Britannica, supports him by implication: 'the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, hairstyles, designs on coins and stamps). Emphasis on deliberateness and manipulativeness distinguishes from casual conversation and easy exchange of ideas. The propagandist has a specified goal or goals'.[6] This insistence upon a motive is confirmed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, whose definition seems to incorporate the best from Qualter's and Chambers's as well as being shorter:

> Any information, ideas, doctrines or special appeals disseminated to influence the opinion, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of any specified group in order to benefit the sponsor either directly or indirectly.[7]

We should not however ignore the partial definition offered by Professor Jacques Ellul:

> Propaganda is a set of methods employed by an organised group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organisation.[8]

This introduces the original concept that organisation is essential to propaganda. Ellul was writing about propaganda in the modern technological society and his definition may or may not hold good for propaganda generally. As a starting point for this thesis we should perhaps adopt the NATO definition, keeping Ellul's organisation caveat in view to be tested against the conclusions from case studies.

Before we leave this word its origin should be noted. In 1662 Pope Gregory XV established the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, a

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5. H G Nicholas 'Propaganda' in Chambers's Encyclopaedia New Revised Edition, Vol XI.

6. Bruce Lannes Smith in Encyclopaedia Britannica 15th Edition, Vol XV.

7. NATO (Unclassified) Glossary of Military Terms, p 2-205.

8. Jacques Ellul (i) Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes (New York, 1965), p 61.

committee of cardinals to whom was entrusted the supervision of foreign missions. Aimed especially at the 'heathen masses of the Americas and the protestant populations of Europe', the Propaganda provided centralised policy, direction and supervision over content and format of liturgical books and techniques of missionary activity.[9] Not surprisingly, all this has lent a deprecatory significance to the word in northern Protestant lands, not shared in southern Catholic countries. Latin language peoples often use the term propagande commercial for 'commercial advertising' without imputing sinister method or motive.

The Nature of Propaganda

Four centuries before Christ, the Indian minister Kautilya wrote about propaganda in his 'Essentials of Indian Statecraft', Arthasatra. On the home front, he advised, propaganda should be carried to the people wherever they were gathered together, in tourist centres, villages and associations. Citizens who demurred should first be propitiated by presents and conciliation. If these failed to win their support, tougher measures would have to be used, such as harassment, exposure to the wrath of the people, taking families hostage, and sentence to exile or forced labour. Special care should be taken to prevent hostile propaganda subverting unreliable elements of the population - the incensed, the ambitious and the disaffected. 'Thus, in his own state, the ruler should preserve parties and factions among the people, friendly or opposed, powerful or puerile, against the intrigues and machinations of the foreigners.' [10]

When dealing with parties within the enemy state, Kautilya advised careful analysis of interest groups to identify possible causes of friction between these groups and the enemy ruler. Propaganda would then be devised to undermine loyalty and promote rebellion. 'Similarly, friends of a foreign king can only be won over by rewards and propaganda, while impending enemies can be seduced by breaking alliances, open threats and by showing the defects of the ruler.' [11] These early prescriptions showed that in a conflict

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9. See Smith, op cit.

10. T N Ramaswamy Essentials of Indian Statecraft: Kautilya's Arthasatra for Contemporary Readers (London 1962) pp 58-59.

11. Ramaswamy, pp 60-61.

situation propaganda could be aimed at friends, neutrals and enemies, civilians as much as military, and they also demonstrated close links between politics (conciliation, breaking alliances), force, and propaganda.

The Greek philosopher Plato described his ideal city state in his dialogue The Republic. In this society friends would have all things in common, including women and children, the weak and sickly would be allowed to die, and all would submit to the rule of an élite group of philosophers known as the Guardians. Acceptance of Guardian rule would be brought about by propaganda. Mothers and nurses were to tell their children only authorised stories, while for adults music was to be strictly censored and drama banned.[12] Lying, Plato said explicitly, was to be a prerogative of government, and central in the scheme of things was 'one royal lie'. Plato explained how this royal or 'noble' lie would promote belief in the preordained superior status of the Guardians and thus ensure unquestioning obedience of their political will by the masses.[13]

The military strategist Sun Tsu wrote in fourth century B C China that enemies could be weakened by encouraging the dissipation of wealth, sending women or boys to befuddle leaders, manipulating character defects, creating anxiety over constant casualties and slandering those with too much honour. 'Generally in war the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior ... To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.'[14]

In the twentieth century, theories on propaganda have multiplied and the subject has attracted the attention of scholars and journalists as well as those interested in its application. Books, theses, newspaper articles and pamphlets have warned of propaganda's potential for evil, boasted of its achievements or described its methods. The Marxist author Georgy Plekhanov originated the idea that the masses needed a cruder stimulus than the propaganda aimed at the educated minority, and adapted the word 'agitation' to this purpose.

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12. Bertrand Russell (i) A History of Western Philosophy (London, 1946) pp 130-131.

13. Russell (i), p 133.

14. Sun Tsu, translated Samuel B Griffiths The Art of War (Oxford, 1963) p 77.

Lenin elaborated upon this theory in his 1902 pamphlet What is to be Done?[15] in which he defined propaganda as the reasoned use of historical and scientific arguments to indoctrinate the educated and enlightened, and agitation as the use of slogans, parables and half-truths to exploit the grievances of the uneducated and unreasonable. In Marxist terminology the two methods are pinned together to form the label 'agitprop'.[16] In reality the two forms overlap and both are propaganda, as is Lenin's use of the words 'historical and scientific arguments' when he means political indoctrination.

Much of the pioneering academic work in this field was American, and between the two world wars Harold Lasswell, W Doob, Walter Lippmann, Edward Munson and Dorothy Blumenstock[17] were influential. In Germany during the same period Eugen Hadamorsky wrote while Dr Joseph Goebbels practised.[18] 'Nothing is easier', Goebbels boasted, 'than leading the people on a leash. I just hold up a dazzling campaign poster and they jump through it.'[19]

Totalitarian regimes, immune from the wish or the need to permit more than one viewpoint, feel no more moral or social inhibition against propaganda itself than did the Church of Rome in the seventeenth century. Mr Michael Binyon in the London Times quotes Mr Viktor Afanasyev, Editor-in-Chief of Pravda as saying, 'Our aim is propaganda, the propaganda of our party and state. We do not hide this. We are clearly a party newspaper.' Binyon goes on to remark that 'propaganda in Soviet society, of course, has positive connotations'.[20] There are good reasons why the liberal democracies

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15. See H M Christman (ed) Essential Works of Lenin (New York, 1966), pp 53-175.
16. See Christman, op cit.
17. See Harold D Lasswell (ii) and Dorothy Blumenstock World Revolutionary Propaganda (New York, 1939); Leonard W Doob Propaganda, Its Psychology and Technique (New York, 1935); Edward L Munson The Management of Men: Handbook of Systematic Development of Morale and Control of Human Behaviour (New York, 1922); Walter Lippmann Public Opinion (New York, 1922).
18. See Eugen Hadamovsky Propaganda and National Power (Oldenburg, 1933) republished in English (New York, 1972).
19. Quoted Anthony Rhodes Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II (London, 1976), p 9.
20. Michael Binyon Times (London, 22 February 1978).

cannot view the subject in this light, some of which will be discussed in a later chapter. All that we need to note now is that besides enjoying advantages in the field of propaganda bestowed by discipline, unity and organisation, totalitarian states also possess (in their minds at any rate) a subtle but important sense of moral superiority over its use. Propaganda is 'their weapon'. This contrasts sharply with the situation in the democracies. Catholicism apart, the events of World War I sharpened the tendency for ordinary people to associate propaganda with 'untruths and fallacies and incitements to violence'. In his book Falsehood in Wartime Sir Arthur Ponsonby quoted John Bright's line: 'When war is declared, Truth is the first casualty',[21] and backed the statement with ample evidence. Hitler's reported remark that the bigger the lie, the better its chance of being believed, did nothing to restore propaganda's reputation. Dame Freya Stark, who spent the years 1939-45 working in this field, remarked:

> The main obstacle was the unfortunate word propaganda itself. When first adopted by the Church of Rome it was simply used in the gospel sense of the spreading of a faith, until a reputation for subtlety whether or not deserved gave it a new and sinister twist of deceit. Two opposite ideas, the truth and the hiding of truth, thus became sheathed in one term, and have shuffled promiscuously inside it ever since.[22]

There now exists in the democracies, particularly Britain and America, an antipathy to the very idea of propaganda. At its extreme, this hostility would consign the subject to the same compartment as poison gas and germ warfare. In generally accepted form it would allow propaganda to be used in war only, as a necessary although evil weapon in the nation's defence. In either form, the attitude has closed minds and stifled knowledge. To what extent this feeling has been subtlely intensified by totalitarian propaganda, it is impossible to say. The implication of such attitudes to the countering of revolutionary propaganda is obvious.

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21. Arthur Ponsonby Falsehood in Wartime (New York, 1929), p 11.

22. Freya Stark (i) Dust in the Lion's Paw (London, 1961), p 64.

Most of today's propaganda theorists and practitioners would deny or at least qualify Hitler's suggestion that big lies win big propaganda successes. Even Goebbels contradicted his Führer by his insistence that facts for dissemination had to be accurate. The reasons for the shift of emphasis away from lies towards truth were practical, not moral, although moral factors were indirectly involved. When both sides are using propaganda the good operator will note what his opponent says and expose any untruths. Goebbels in 1940 destroyed the effectiveness of some British propaganda by a variation of this method. Although the English propagandists were not lying at the time, Goebbels was able to recall Britain's 1916 propaganda lies, which had later been admitted[23], and by association cast doubt on the 1940 statements. Expanded sources of news, greater public scepticism and an enhanced appreciation by propagandists of the importance of credibility have all contributed to the shift. Professor Ellul comments that the truth which pays off is in the realm of facts. The necessary falsehoods, which also pay off, are today disguised within intentions and interpretations[24]. One limitation on the use of truth is the fact that truth can sometimes be incredible. Propagandists therefore talk of using 'selected credible truth'.

The moral factor indirectly involved in the shift away from untruthful propaganda arises out of the present day desire of national governments, whether democratic or totalitarian, to appear respectable and virtuous. Bertrand Russell referred to this desire, in words that suggest that the apparent moral quality is often no more than another propaganda theme in support of political and military power:

> If the side that you think right prevails, that is because it has superior power. It is true that power, often, depends upon opinion, and opinion upon propaganda; it is true also, that it is an advantage in propaganda to seem more virtuous than your adversary, and that one way of seeming virtuous is to be virtuous ... But there are important limitations. In the first place, those who have seized power can, by controlling propaganda, cause their party to appear virtuous. [25]

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23. See, for example, Ponsonby op cit.

24. Ellul (i), p 53.

25. Russell (i), p 531.

Ellul argues that Lenin and Hitler understood that the modern world was essentially a world of 'means', and that ends and aims had been transformed by the profusion of means. In Lenin's political strategy the means were permitted to assume first place and this led him, on the one hand, to modify Marx's doctrine, and on the other, to give the doctrine itself an importance secondary to action. Tactics and the development of means, then, became the principal objects even of political science.[26] With Hitler, doctrine was not merely demoted, it disappeared altogether. Neither his vague millennium nor his anti-Semitism could be considered a doctrine. Instead Hitler used pure action.[27] Thus instead of propaganda serving ideology, we see in these examples the reverse. Ideology, Ellul believes, has a small role in the modern world. Propaganda's task is less and less to propagate ideologies; it now obeys its own laws and becomes autonomous.[28] If we feel inspired or threatened by an ideology, we may possibly be reacting more to propaganda than to any real body of ideas or beliefs. To say that such-and-such a nation or movement is invincible because of the strength of its ideology may really be an acknowledgement of the invincible power of propaganda.

Kautilya showed how propaganda can be aimed at several audiences. Colonel T E Lawrence expanded on this aspect in his classic account of guerrilla warfare behind Turkish lines. On propaganda he wrote:

> Some of it concerned the crowd, an adjustment of its spirit to the point where it became useful to exploit in action, and the pre-direction of this changing spirit to a certain end. Some of it concerned the individual, and then it became a rare art of human kindness, transcending, by purposed emotion, the gradual logical sequence of the mind. It was more subtle than tactics, and better worth doing, because it dealt with uncontrollables,

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26. Ellul (i), p 195.

27. 'Every idea that is meant to move the world has not only the right but also the obligation of securing control of those means which will enable the idea to be carried into effect.' Adolf Hitler Mein Kampf (London, 1939), p 288.

28. Ellul (i) p 196.

> with subjects incapable of direct command. It considered the capacity for mood of our men, their complexities and mutability, and the cultivation of whatever in them promised to profit our intention. We had to arrange their minds in order of battle just as carefully and as formally as other officers would arrange their bodies. And not only our own men's minds, though naturally they came first. We must also arrange the minds of the enemy, so far as we could reach them; then those other minds of the nation supporting us behind the firing line, since more than half the battle passed there in the back; then the minds of the enemy nation waiting the verdict; and of the neutrals looking on; circle beyond circle.[29]

Implicit in these words is an acknowledgement of the superior power of propaganda over one's own side, as opposed to 'the minds of the enemy'. This fact is frequently overlooked by writers on the subject, who see in the psychological attack on enemy morale the most exciting, and therefore in their eyes the most important, form of propaganda. Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien described how the Irish Government once issued 'a repulsive and expensive pamphlet' called Ireland's Right to Unity and distributed this internationally for propaganda purposes. It was, he said, 'written by an old Sinn Feiner for other old Sinn Feiners; it made them feel good and they did not trouble to imagine what effect it might have on its hypothetical foreign readers.[30] Cruise O'Brien brought this set of phenomena to the attention of Professor C Northcote Parkinson, who then framed the following law:

> Propaganda begins, and ends, at home.[31]

At first sight this Parkinson Law is hard to accept, but with expert help we begin to understand its significance. Ellul identifies six main limits on propaganda's effectiveness which may be summarised as follows:

1. Initially propaganda cannot operate except within the framework of pre-existing attitudes, which it can modify only very slowly.

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29. T E Lawrence Seven Pillars of Wisdom (London, 1935), p 195.
30. Conor Cruise O'Brien (i) 'Epilogue: The Embers of Easter' in Edward and Pyle 1916 The Easter Rising (London, 1968), p 234.
31. Ibid.

2. Propaganda cannot reverse fundamental trends and sociological factors of the society in which it acts. Unlike 1, which is a relative impediment, this rule is absolute.

3. Propaganda must be consistent with the facts. A basic fact is always necessary. Propaganda can never be the advancement of ideas, but must pronounce judgement on certain facts (whether these judgements are accurate or not).

4. Time abridges propaganda's capability in two ways. To have any effect, psychological action needs to be lasting and continuous. Time also imposes a limitation because of the weak durability of its effects.

5. Despite all technique, the propagandist's art remains uncertain in one important respect: he is unable to foresee the response that the individual subjected to his propaganda will make.

6. Finally, and directly relating to Parkinson, propaganda addressed to the outside, to a foreign country or enemy, is inevitably largely ineffective. At its most effective and most dangerous when working within a group, society or nation, propaganda loses much of its power when this arrangement is impossible, as is the case in overseas operations. The propagandist is likely to be ignorant of the attitudes, interests and presuppositions of the target audience: he may have difficulty establishing continuity or being in real 'communication'. There will be problems too of achieving immediacy, of using mass media, of making 'pre-propaganda'.[32] Psychological action can be fully effective only in the hands of nationals addressing themselves to their fellow citizens. This is the secret force of communist propaganda, which uses national parties or front organisations.[33]

It is obvious that this conclusion is of immense importance to this study of revolutionary propaganda.

The ways and means of spreading propaganda are many, and vary from setting to setting and from age to age. Visual media include the

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32 See p 18.

33. Ellul (i) pp 294-302.

written word, pictures, cartoons and symbols, spread in the form of leaflets, handbills, posters, pamphlets, newspapers and books. Audio media are, first and foremost, the spoken word, whether directed face to face, by radio or loudspeaker or tape, or as a rumour, but also include music and such symbolic effects as the morse code 'V' sign so successful in World War II. Audio/visual means include film, television, drama, and 'propaganda of the deed',[34] although the latter depends for its main impact on being relayed second-hand by the other propaganda media. A reading of this list will indicate how closely propaganda media and news media correspond, and this points to the crucial importance of the media's response to a revolutionary situation.

One authority, Mr Oliver Thomson, has identified three main propaganda message styles; the purely rational, the quasi-rational/ half emotional, and entirely emotional. The first is easily countered by an opponent's rational arguments and is therefore seldom used. The second and third are often effective, making use respectively of propaganda techniques in conjunction with apparent rationality, and the constant repetition of emotive slogans accompanied by emotional stimuli. Thomson also writes of message structure, being either linea (or logical), as in the Communist Manifesto, or in the form of a parable, as in the case of an epic, novel, theatre, or TV dramatised documentary, or possessing ritual quality, involving build-up, climax and solution.[35]

Mention has earlier been made of the work of Professor Jacques Ellul. His book Propaganda, The Formation of Men's Attitudes, first published in French in 1962[36] and in English in 1965[37], is of first importance to anyone wishing to understand the subject. Ellul regards propaganda as a sociological phenomenon essential to the technological society, which in turn makes propaganda possible in its modern form and order of magnitude. It is with us forever, aimed at the individual in the mass, all-pervading. Only in passing is propaganda concerned to change opinions. Much more importantly it aims to intensify existing trends, to sharpen and focus them and to lead men to action.

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34. see p 22.

35. Oliver Thomson Mass Persuasion in History, A Historical Analysis of the Development of Propaganda Techniques (Edinburgh, 1977) pp 15-17.

36. Propagandes (Paris, 1962).

37. Ellul (i) op cit.

Ellul identifies several forms of propaganda active today. His terms and meanings will be used in this thesis. First, there is Pre-Propaganda, the conditioning of minds with vast amounts of incoherent information, posing as 'facts' and as 'information', that create pseudo needs that other forms of propaganda can later satisfy. These other forms include Political Propaganda, through which a government, a party, an administration or a pressure group seeks to change public behaviour, and Sociological Propaganda, which combines extremely diverse forms within itself but is generally the way that any society seeks to integrate the maximum number of individuals into itself, to unify its members' behaviour according to a pattern, to spread its life-style and thus impose itself on other groups. Basically, sociological propaganda is the penetration of an ideology by means of its sociological context. It produces a progressive adaptation to a certain order of things, a certain concept of human relations, which gently and unconsciously moulds individuals and makes them conform to society. Ellul sees it as a spontaneous phenomenon rather than the result of deliberate manipulation. Integration Propaganda, on the other hand, is described as the creation of developed nations in the twentieth century. It is the propaganda of conformity, an instrument of government, aiming to make the individual participate in his society in every way. Ellul believes that integration propaganda is the most important form in our time, seeking not a temporary excitement but a total moulding of the person in depth. Finally he refers to Agitation Propaganda, giving the adjective a meaning different from that intended by Lenin when he drew his distinction between propaganda and agitation.[38]

Ellul sees agitation propaganda as most often subversive, with the stamp of opposition. It is led by a party seeking to destroy the government or the established order. It seeks rebellion or war. But although it is most often in opposition, the propaganda of agitation can also be made by a government when, for instance, it wants to galvanise energies and mobilise the entire nation for war or for some revolutionary course of action.

In Ellul's view no propaganda is possible unless psychological influence rests on reality, and the recruiting of individuals into cadres or movements goes hand in hand with psychological manipulation. This is where he introduces his concept of organisation

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38. Ellul (i), pp 62-79.

being essential to propaganda. The sense of belonging to a group, of being led into action and 'committed' leads to the 'encirclement' of the individual. Ellul regards the manipulation of symbols to be necessary for three reasons; to persuade the individual to enter the framework of the organisation, to furnish him with reasons, justifications, motivations for actions, and to obtain his total allegiance. 'More and more we are learning that genuine compliance is essential if action is to be effective.'[39]

Discussing how liberal societies can protect themselves against the dangers posed by propaganda, Ellul is profoundly disturbing. Democracy's need of propaganda is unquestionable; at the same time 'it is evident that a conflict exists between the principles of democracy - particularly its concept of the individual - and the processes of propaganda'.[40] Some of democracy's fundamental aspects tend to paralyse the conduct of effective propaganda. If these obstacles are overcome, it means that democracy has lost its true character. He concludes that the only safe course is to show people the extreme effectiveness of the weapon used against them, so that they may be aroused to self defence rather than soothed by illusions.

Turning from theory to practice, it may be useful to list some of the commonly recognised techniques of propaganda, many of which are also used in commercial advertising.

Symbolism uses any device, visual or aural, which by established association arouses predictable emotions. An audience can be warmed towards a propagandist by an Appeal to cherished traditions and values. It is sometimes better to make a point by Insinuation rather than by blatant statement. Ridicule can be effective, although it can also be dangerous: much depends on the subtlety of its use. Simplification is really a euphemism for selecting facts favourable to the propagandist's message rather than using the entire truth. This is otherwise known as Card Stacking. In the Mirror technique the propagandist deliberately presents facts unfavourable to his cause to gain the confidence of his audience. With enhanced credibility he is

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39. Ellul (i) p 23.
40. Ellul (i), p 233.

then able to obtain acceptance of his intended message. Difficult facts can be Rationalised by spurious logic. Enemies can be hurt by Name-calling (leading by repetition to a new Symbol), by Character Assassination, or by Guilt Association. Slogans unite those who chant them and shut out reason. Vagueness is often a characteristic of slogan-making, but can be applied more widely. A vague statement that possesses Appeal can be all things to all audiences.

Transfer of Testimonial involves associating new ideas with a person, image or symbol revered by the audience. Nostalgia, the dreams of happier bygone days, and reference to such universally appreciated concepts as family and children, can be used to good propaganda effect. A closely-linked technique is sometimes known as Glittering Generalities, and involves linking one's cause to concepts that a section of the public holds to be above criticism. 'Social justice', 'one man, one vote', 'civil rights' are examples. By projecting a leader as an ordinary, down to earth person, his popularity may improve: this is the Plain Folks ploy. Once a campaign is under way its progress can be stimulated by the Bandwagon method, which persuades people to pledge their allegiance while there is still time, to join the winning side. Finally there is Purity of Motive, the technique that suggests that the propagandist is acting only in the best interest of his audience, which is not to be confused with the theme of purity relating to the cause itself. A Target Audience is an individual or group, whether enemy, neutral or friend, to be influenced. The audience's Receptivity is its vulnerability to particular means of persuasion, and its Susceptibility relates to its vulnerability to a particular idea. A Theme is a basic idea, such as hatred, and a Message is the means of bringing the theme home to target audiences. A message such as 'The police torture and kill on behalf of the oppressive regime' might focus hatred against the government and its security forces.

Whenever a message is delivered verbally, the choice of words is important. Certain words and phrases have well established connotations through which the narrator can subtly interpret the facts he is communicating. 'The enemy resisted fanatically', but 'our troops held their positions bravely'. Propagandists can also change the meanings of words, either by capturing a term like 'democracy' and applying its glitter to some totally undemocratic political system,

or by substitution, such as calling police 'pigs', or by condemnatory usage, whereby a once-proud word like 'property' is made synonymous with theft. The Black Power leader Mr Stokely Carmichael was keenly aware of the power of words, and he quoted Lewis Carroll to make his point:

> "When I use a word," Humpty-Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty-Dumpty, "who is to be the master - that's all." [41]

Propaganda strategy is guided by the political and military aims of the leadership. The target audiences are selected, the results hoped for (the objectives) are listed and from this assessment the propagandist selects themes and related messages designed to lead his audiences towards the desired states of mind. He may have four or five constant themes which relate to enduring aspects of the overall struggle. In addition, for each phase of the campaign he will use themes relating to the various dominant issues of the time. Constant and tactical themes may be varied in style and emphasis for different target audiences - enemies, friends and neutrals - but it is dangerous to be inconsistent or contradictory. A story or angle that makes a point essential for the propagation of a theme or message is sometimes called a 'line'.

There is a distinction between the stories and lines that carry the message and the techniques that help put the message across. They may be likened, respectively, to the script of a film and the skills of film editing. Nevertheless,the two seem sometimes to be nearly the same. One of the commonest themes in conflict situations, and one that dominates communist propaganda, is that of the 'inevitability of victory', or 'invincibility of the cause'. This may seem identical to the technique of the 'bandwagon'. This apparent identity is misleading. The theme will be constant throughout a campaign. It will endure among the party faithful even when events appear to render it hopeless. It is only when the tide of events is running hard in the campaign's favour, and when the theme has strong credibility, that the technique of the bandwagon can be used to sell the theme to mass audiences.

Revolutionary propaganda has established some terms and techniques of its own. The nineteenth century anarchist Bakunin

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41. See Donald Rackin (Ed) Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, A Critical Handbook (Belmont, Calif, 1969), p 328.

coined the phrase Propaganda of the Deed to describe an act, usually of terrorist violence, committed more for its indirect effect upon public opinion than for any direct benefit arising from the act itself. Mr Paul Wilkinson has suggested that 'the terrorist by his act of violence is telling the world: "We are here. Look what we can do. Heed us or there is worse to come".'[42] We may comment that this message is the one intended for 'enemies' and that the same act is telling 'neutrals' and 'friends' other things. To 'neutrals' it may say: 'We are here. See how the weak oppose the oppressors. Obviously our cause has justice on its side. Support us'. And to 'friends' it may impart this message: 'We are here. Look how the mighty forces of oppression fade before our blows. There is no cause to fear them. Victory will be ours. Join.'

Another term in common use is Armed Propaganda. The Brazilian guerrilla Carlos Marighella defined this in terms similar to Propaganda of the Deed.[43] His is not the generally accepted view, which sees Armed Propaganda as the indoctrination of the masses by armed bands of guerrillas who are able to use a mixture of persuasion and coercion to influence their literally captive audiences. The New Left ideologue Regis Debray devotes a whole chapter to this subject in his Revolution in the Revolution?: 'Cells, public or underground, will be organized in the villages; union struggles will be supported or initiated; and the program of the Revolution will be reiterated again and again.'[44] Dezinformatsiya, 'disinformation', is a Soviet technique in which incidents calculated to affect public opinion in a certain way are covertly engineered by propagandists, appearing to their audiences to have arisen 'naturally' out of the march of events. Sometimes the group whose reputation is to be injured by the incident is induced to play a prominent part in the action.

Finally, practitioners recognise three shades of propaganda: White propaganda, disseminated and acknowledged by the sponsor or by an accredited agency: Grey propaganda, which does not specifically

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42. Paul Wilkinson Terrorism and the Liberal State (London, 1977) p 111.
43. Carlos Marighella Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla (no date) pp 33-34.
44. Regis Debray Revolution in the Revolution? (New York, 1967), p 47.

identify any source: and Black propaganda, which purports to emanate from a source other than the true one. Black operations sometimes involve the setting up of bogus sources that appear to their audiences to be domestic when in fact they are foreign. During the second World War Britain made radio broadcasts to the German army that were dressed up to sound like the work of disaffected elements within the Wehrmacht. Such operations depend for their success upon credibility, which in turn relies on truthful, up-to-date reporting of events that the audience can verify. The need for a close working relationship between the intelligence staffs and the propaganda organisation for this and other operations is obvious. The association in many people's minds of lies with black propaganda is mistaken. This impression, strengthened no doubt by the term 'black propaganda' itself, has been worked on by revolutionary groups who sometimes use the words in a deprecatory sense in order to discredit any government statement.

Associated Concepts and Terms

The term Psychological Operation (or warfare, action, etc) is closely related to the subject of this study. In seeking a definition, the difficulty lies not so much in deciding what is psychological warfare, as in determining what is not. It could be argued that the purpose of war is to influence the enemy leader (to surrender rather than to fight, to withdraw rather than to hold ground, to accept your conditions rather than any longer to suffer the consequences of refusal), and as a consequence all conflict is psychological. Such a view would see military violence, along with political and economic activity, merely as a means of changing the mind of one's opponent. This is one way of looking at the struggle for power; indeed, the historical survey later in the chapter tends to see events from such an angle. Taken, however, to its logical conclusion this approach must inevitably promote the subject under discussion from its status as a component of conflict to pre-eminence, rather in the way that Karl Marx's interpretation of history hoists economics into pride of place. If we accept the pre-eminence of psychological action in all matters affecting conflict, our subject expands across the entire spectrum of human activity and we are

discussing the role of kings. It will perhaps be better to confine psychological operations to the status most people might assign to them, an important but subordinate situation in the King's household. Consequently too much ought not to be read into the second sentence of this NATO definition:

> Planned psychological activities in peace and war directed towards enemy, friendly and neutral audiences in order to create attitudes and behaviour favourable to the achievement of political and military objectives. These operations inclu psychological action, psychological warfare, and psychologica consolidation and encompass those political, military, economi ideological and information activities designed for achieving a desired psychological effect. [45]

Our adopted definition of propaganda is wide enough to cover all activities that seek to influence the group, that is, people in the mass. 'Propaganda of the deed' shows that the words 'special appeals' include an assassination or the blowing up of a pub. It is clear, too, that all propaganda is a psychological operation. In matters affecting mass opinion the two terms are synonymous. However psychological warfare has other manifestations also. These are outside the meaning of propaganda, and outside, too, the scope of this thesis. If gunmen holding hostages are talked into surrender by the skill and patience of the police, when terrorists lose faith in their weapons after one blows up in use as a result of covert action by the security forces, if nomadic tribesmen side with guerrillas because these warriors have made more land safe for the grazing of flocks, when an army adopts a machine-gun with a higher rate of fire than is technically necessary because the noise it makes is so frightening to the enemy, these are all psychological operations. This form of warfare also has an important role in the art of deception, whereby the enemy is misled as to the real strength, disposition and intention of one's forces. In passing it may be noted that in World War I America and Britain engaged quite openly in 'propaganda', while in the second great war the Americans used the term 'psychological operations' and the British hid their activities in this field behind the cover name 'political warfare'. The US have stuck to their World War II terminology and have not been afraid to

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45. NATO (unclassified) Glossary of Military Terms, p 2-206.

publish official accounts of their own and other countries' endeavours.[46] In Britain pressure groups seem to have tried to bring the same discredit upon the concept of psychological operations as earlier events and pressures have done for the word 'propaganda'.[47] A possible intention is to deprive the government of this weapon by the technique of 'guilt association'.

No thesis on propaganda can avoid reference to Public Opinion. This is a phenomenon that some people dismiss as unreal, or see as something so vague that measurement is impossible, or liken to the Delphic oracle, a device through which ambitious or powerful men lay claim to special wisdom or guidance. These positions can all be defended, but at the end of the day public opinion will still be with us, and cannot in a study of propaganda be ignored. Some definitions should therefore be examined. Chambers's offer: 'an aggregate of the individual views, attitudes and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community'.[48]

Now this is vague, considering how difficult it is to aggregate people's opinions, how unclear individuals often are about their own views, attitudes and beliefs on any particular topic, and how imprecise are the words 'significant proportion'. The expression does not readily lend itself to exact definition in lay terms, and the rather unsatisfactory nature of this and other attempts should serve to warn us against treating public opinion in the general sense as anything more than a hazy notion. Those who talk confidently about public opinion on some topic as being this or that are usually expressing a very private opinion on how other people's views, attitudes and beliefs are, or ought to be, conditioned.

There is, however, another definition of public opinion that deserves study. This is the view held by some researchers in the field

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46. See William E Daugherty and Morris Janowitz A Psychological Warfare Casebook (Washington, 1958).

47. See, for instance, 'One Eyed Psych-Ops' in Time Out (London, 13-19 Oct 1972) and 'Civil Servants selected for Psychological Warfare Studies' in Irish Times (Dublin, 27 Oct 1976).

48. Chambers's Encyclopaedia Vol XI.

of Mass Communications, expressed in this case by Dr Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. In her view 'public opinion is controversial opinion which can (and on some matters must) be uttered publically without risking isolation'.[49] Noelle-Neumann's definition advances from the assumption that most members of a society try to avoid isolation and are therefore ready to adjust or to conform, however great the effort. Isolation, she suggests, may also be equated with rejection, disdain and contempt, in contrast with the desired effects of popularity, affection, respect and esteem. The problem of measurement and the dangers of unfounded claims as to which way public opinion has turned remain, but this definition certainly provides a better starting point.

To the disciples of Mass Communications Theory, 'Climate of Opinion' is a closely-linked concept used to describe the totality of opinions, cognitive-affective attitudes, values and behaviour which, for a certain period and at a certain place, either must be displayed publically by members of a society in order not to become isolated, or may be displayed publically without risk of isolation from the other members of the society. Researchers also talk about dominant opinions, attitudes, tastes and customs or expected, fixed and approved patterns of behaviour which together form the climate of opinion. The term is seen as appropriate because, from the viewpoint of the individual member of society, climate is something external which nevertheless and most strongly influences his inner being by its condition and variability.[50]

Relating public opinion to propaganda, Ellul points out that in large societies individuals do not share the direct experience of problems on which they must make decisions. Public opinion in such societies has three characteristics. It depends upon institutionalised channels of information bringing to the people concerned the facts on which they will take a position. Opinion will depend to a large extent on such intermediate channels. Secondly, public opinion cannot express itself directly, but only through such channels as elections,

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49. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann 'Mass Media and the Climate of Opinion', paper at 10th General Assembly, International Association for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester, 1 Sep 1976 (p 2 of transcript).

50. Noelle-Neumann, p 2.

political parties, newspapers, opinion polls and referenda. Lastly, this collective opinion ought not to exist at all, because of the different standards, languages, cultures and social positions of the people who make up the society. Yet, Ellul explains, such a society does produce a collective 'public opinion' and this is possible because very often individuals are not really apprised of the facts, but only of abstract symbols that give the facts a shape in which they can serve as a base for public opinion. 'Public opinion forms itself around attitudes and theoretical problems not clearly related to the actual situation. And the symbols most effective in the formation of public opinion are those remote from reality. Therefore, public opinion always rests on problems that do not correspond to reality.' [51]

Before moving on to the setting of the case studies in the history of conflict propaganda, certain additional words and terms that will be used in this thesis ought perhaps to be defined, since their usage is not always standard. Ellul draws a distinction between a Revolt, which he sees as a refusal to obey authority often leading to spontaneous violence, and a Revolution, which he defines as a planned attempt to overthrow the existing regime.[52] However, in apparent contradiction Mr Menachem Begin refers to his well-led, skilfully planned, 4-year struggle against the British in Palestine as a revolt. While the many shades of meaning and definitions imposed by Service glossaries are respected, in this thesis the two words, together with Rebellion, Insurrection, Insurgency and Rising are used by the writer in their more general meaning of internal violence challenging government authority. The term Counter-Insurgency here means government action to quell the rebellion and protect the political status quo. Counter-Revolution, in the meaning accepted in this work, involves government action not just to quell the revolt but to superimpose fresh ideological and political ideas. By Security Forces is meant the police and those armed forces of a country that are committed to countering insurgency. Leverage is a

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51. Ellul (i), pp 100-101.

52. Jacques Ellul (ii) Autopsy of Revolution (New York, 1971), pp 38-56.

term denoting indirect pressures exerted either through diplomatic channels, through public opinion at home or abroad, or by economic means, that force one party to a dispute to alter policy, not because that party wants to, but because the consequences of adhering to the original policy appear worse than the consequences of a change. Leverage is a form of coercion rather than persuasion. We will refer to Legitimacy and Credibility, stretching the meanings of these words in their propaganda usage beyond their normal day-to-day application. Legitimacy here relates to the focus of group allegiance, which may or may not correspond to legitimacy in legal terms. It reflects the group's verdict on an assumed right to govern. Credibility is a reputation for truth, for rationality, and for an ability to see strategy through to its conclusion, as well as reliability in reporting facts.

The Case studies in relation to the History of Conflict Propaganda

Authorities on the subject of propaganda agree that persuasive techniques have been a part of warfare from earliest recorded history. Our first case study is set in Persia at about the time when the Normans were consolidating their hold over England, and it may come as no surprise to find propaganda playing an important role in the struggle for power between rival sects of Islam. In a thesis that aims to throw light onto a contemporary problem the relevance of delving so far back into history may not be immediately obvious. It is justified in the writer's opinion if the study reveals continuity in revolutionary propaganda style, organisation, themes and usage between the medieval Assassins and their modern counterparts. The search for evidence of such continuity has been assisted by a document in the Library of the School of Oriental and Asiatic Studies which is, in effect, an eleventh century directive on subversive Fatimid propaganda.

Between the defeat of the Assassins in the mid-thirteenth century and the Rising in Dublin, 1916 which comprises our second study, the means available for the spreading of propaganda increased enormously. It was in revolutions particularly that the new propaganda means sometimes proved decisive. Written appeals followed in the wake of literacy and the printing presses. Had it not been for

the invention of printing sixty years before Luther's revolutionary religious teaching, it is possible that his ideas might have perished. By writing his Appeal to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation in the vernacular German instead of the academic Latin, he captured a wide readership for his teaching all over northern Europe. The threat posed by the printed word to established order was soon appreciated. In 1559 Pope Paul IV instigated an index of prohibited books and four years later Charles IX of France decreed that nothing was to be printed without his consent. During the Thirty Years War a flood of propaganda tracts, many illustrated with wood cuts, emanated from both sides. Speeches, sermons and face-to-face persuasion also swayed opinions. Similar activities stirred emotions before, during and after the Civil War in England. Within months of Oliver Cromwell's death pamphlets reviling his memory were being circulated, as history was revised to suit political needs. History as propaganda is a phenomenon almost as common as propaganda in history.

Revolutionary propaganda encouraged and accompanied the secession of the American Colonies. When in 1770 Samuel Adams coined the phrase 'Boston Massacre' he did so to exasperate local opinion. Five civilians had indeed died after British troops fired into a mob, but the soldiers concerned went before a local court where murder charges were rightly dismissed. The emotive tag and the resentment it was intended to inspire were kept before the public by hand bills produced from a wood cut of the event by Paul Revere, which depicted the British as callous oppressors. All this was pre-propaganda, which helped to condition colonial minds to the justness of their cause should the need for violence arise in the future. When in 1775 that need did arise the principles of the revolution were debated, and set out one year later in the Declaration of Independence, a propaganda document of inspiration, remarkable for its powerful eloquence and powerful for its moderation and simplicity.[53] The rebels carried their religion into their design for a just future, but the design itself was nevertheless secular, a free and independent nation. Without challenging spiritual values, the Declaration was to become in its own right an ideological statement of lasting consequence, perhaps the first lay document to match in importance the great religious teachings.

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53. Inspired by Thomas Paine's pamphlet 'Common Sense'. See Gorham Munson 12 Decisive Battles of the Mind (New York, 1942) pp 75-80.

It is noteworthy that the Declaration, like all the examples of propaganda offered so far in this sketch, was aimed first and foremost at the domestic or internal audience. The authors of the document also needed international goodwill and assistance in their struggle against England. With this in mind the Declaration addressed itself to the external audience:

> a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they (the rebels) should declare the causes which impel them to the separation (from Britain). [54]

During the War of Independence the Americans demonstrated an aptitude for addressing the enemy, as well as friends and neutrals. They circulated leaflets amongst British troops which set out to intensify these soldiers' existing reluctance to fight against their own kith and kin and which pointed to the Britons' miserable existence and the rebels' relative freedom. Other literature, playing upon a wave of anti-Catholic sentiment at that time sweeping England, insisted that the real purpose of British military action in America was to 'compel your Fellow Subjects there to submit to Popery and slavery ...'.[55]

George III's decision to hire mercenaries from the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel and the Duke of Brunswick to serve in America led Congress to resolve:

> That a committee of three be appointed, to devise a plan for encouraging the Hessians, and other foreigners ... to quit that iniquitous service: the members chosen, Mr Wilson, Mr Jefferson, and Mr Stockton. [56]

The committee drafted hand bills, which Congress approved, offering the Hessian troops citizenship, freedom of religion and 50 acres of land each if they would desert the British service. A later edition tempted officers with between 200 and 1000 acres, according to rank. Initially these had little or no effect. Attempts to disseminate

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54. Quoted Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, (New York, 1975), Vol 8, p 591.

55. A C Ashworth 'The Enduring Weapon', in The British Army Review (London, 1958), p 66.

56. W C Ford, et al (Ed) Journals of the Continental Congress (Washington, 1904-37) Vol 4, p 369.

the literature were not particularly successful and the Germans, indoctrinated by the British into believing the worst of the enemy and initially successful in battle, were in no mood to heed such appeals.

This changed as the conflict wore on, as victory over the rebels seemed elusive, and as casualties and bitter experience damped German morale. The appeal to desert was no longer just an idea. The fact of military failure made it seem like a reasoned reaction to that fact. The Americans were clever enough to treat captured Germans well and, in subsequent prisoner exchanges, have them returned to their units in a mood to persuade their comrades to surrender. Of the 30,000 Germans deployed to the fight, some five or six thousand did in fact desert.[57]

The propaganda campaign was not confined to North America. In an ingenious effort to turn off the supply of mercenaries at source the Americans faked a letter supposedly from Count von Schaumburg in Europe to the Hessian commander in America, lamenting that the Hessian losses at Trenton had not been even greater than was the case, with consequent benefit in the form of 'blood money' from the British. The purpose of this fake, which was circulated in France, was to impress influential Europeans with the infamy of a pact binding George III to reward the German princes by payments 'per corpse'. In fact no such agreement had ever been made but the letter, and its false implication, were widely believed.[58]

Secular political ideology again replaced religion as justification for revolt later in the same century when France embarked upon revolution. Here the new political theories advanced not in harmony with religious belief but in contradiction or rejection. Robespierre even devised a new state religion, the worship of the Supreme Being. As the so-called popular will became all-powerful, the ability to manipulate the hitherto apolitical and still largely uneducated masses was recognised as the key to power.

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57. A B Faust The German Element in the United States (Boston, 1909), Vol I, pp 354-355.

58. See C Berger Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of The American Revolution (Pennsylvania, 1961).

Two weapons were found particularly effective - terror and propaganda. The French revolution heralded in the era of the revolutionary myth. Jacques Ellul described it thus:

> Until 1789, revolutions were attempted and occasionally achieved, but never romanticized. Then the era of the revolutionary epic began. Revolution, in the person of the revolutionaries, started to look at and admire itself, to grimace and disport in the mirror. The myth of the revolution was about to descend on the modern world. [59]

Possibly the best known example of music as a propaganda medium arose out of this revolution. In July 1792 the men who came from Marseille to Paris marched to the stirring Hymne des Marseillois. Soon it was the French National Anthem, and indeed the song of republican and revolutionary movements worldwide. Architecture, too, had its part to play. M Eugenie de Keyser had this to say of the style of the First Empire:

> To retain power over men who believed themselves to be free the ruler had to display such strength that resistance would be futile, such splendour as to make rebellion a form of blasphemy ... Having stifled opposition by gagging the press, his (Napoleon's) regime only had to inspire enthusiasm and fear. Building a triumphal arch became an act of State.[60]

Napoleon certainly possessed a keen appreciation of the importance of propaganda. 'To attach no importance to public opinion', he wrote, 'is a proof you do not merit its suffrage'. Also, 'the truth is not half so important as what people think to be true'. And he was aware that, for a military commander, propaganda could not on its own achieve miracles; it had to run parallel with military and political action, with facts. In his own words, 'the greatest orator in the world is success'. [61]

1848 saw the proclamation of the French Second Republic as a new generation of revolutionaries drove out Louis-Phillippe. At the time these dramatic events must have overshadowed the publication of a political statement by two almost unknown philosophers named Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Yet their work, the Communist Manifesto, became a dominant influence in world affairs, effective long after the

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59. Ellul (ii), p 86.

60. Eugenie de Keyser The Romantic West, (Geneva, 1965), p 47.

61. See Robert B Holtman Napoleonic Propaganda (Louisiana, 1950).

looting mobs of Paris had passed into history. The inconsistent but powerful political philosophy of the Manifesto was expressed in wonderfully effective propaganda terms, ending with these famous words:

> Die Proletarier haben nichts in ihr zu verlieren als ihre Ketten. Sie haben eine Welt zu gewinnen. Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt euch! [62]

Rather less appealing but equally to the point were these additional words from Marx, published one year later:

> We are ruthless, and ask no quarter from you.
> When our time comes, we shall not disguise our terrorism.[63]

During the nineteenth century industrialisation changed the face of Europe and North America. Populations grew and cities attracted labour from the land. Educational opportunities and scope for social advancement did not always keep pace with the extension of the franchise, creating a gap between democratic theory and practice that was quickly filled by the ready-made judgements of political leaders or commentators. The process of disseminating such views was facilitated by the concurrent revolution in communications. Railways, telephones and telegraphs, and cheap and efficient postal services encouraged mobility of people and ideas. Newly literate masses created a demand for mass circulation daily newspapers, a demand that entrepreneur skills and new technology combined to satisfy. Thus was born the means by which the few could reach the minds of millions and the scope for propaganda activity increased dramatically.

The important role of the war correspondent in affecting public attitudes towards a war was demonstrated in 1854-56 by the London Times reporters William Howard Russell and Thomas Chenery.[64] Their

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62. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Manifesto of the Communist Party, (Moscow, 1952). Translation reads:

> The workers have nothing to lose in this (revolution) but their chains. They have a world to gain.
> Workers of the world, unite!

63. Neue Rheinische Zeitung May 1849, quoted George Watson 'Race and the Socialists' in Encounter (London, Nov 1976) Vol XLVII, No 5, p 19.

64. See P Knightley The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker from the Crimea to Vietnam (London, 1975).

descriptions of the consequences of maladministration upon the soldiers fighting in the Crimea, and specially upon the wounded, shocked the hitherto complaisant and ignorant British public and helped create a climate of opinion in which demands for reform became irresistible. This was not war propaganda, far from it. The incident showed, however, that criticism from, as it were, one's own side, could influence public opinion and lead to changes in policy. Given goodwill and intelligence, this could only be to the good, however great the embarrassment to officialdom. But what if the criticism was ill-founded, unbalanced or inspired by hostile motive? The full potential was to lie dormant for more than a century.

The nineteenth century anarchist movement entered its period of terrorism, which it referred to as 'propaganda of the deed', after its failure to attract massive working class support. The turn to violence in the 1880s and 1890s has been interpreted as a reflection of despair and frustration rather than of confidence in the movement. 'To shock, to infuriate, to register one's protest became the only thing that any decent or sensitive man could do.'[65] The anarchist prophet, Michael Bakunin, anticipated that the violent acts of the revolutionary core would stimulate a general rising that would sweep away all public institutions. Such futile hopes were dismissed by Friedrich Engels with contempt:

> They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority. Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is: it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will on the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon - authoritative means if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not wish to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries.[66]

The Great War of 1914-18 was the first in which the new means of communication enabled propaganda to be conducted on the grand scale. The Germans set up special sections in each of their principal government departments, charged with propaganda at home and overseas:

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65. Gerald Brenan The Spanish Labyrinth (Cambridge, 1962), p 162.

66. Quoted James Joll The Anarchists (London, 1964), p 110.

the French made similar arrangements.[67] Britain began the war with a War Propaganda Bureau which in 1917 expanded into a Department and finally became a Ministry. Mr Charles Roetter has pointed to a special advantage enjoyed by Britain in this field. He argues that from the prolonged and, for many,agonising moral reappraisal from pacifist or neutral leanings to full support for joining the war in 1914 emerged intellectual and moral justification for Britain's cause that provided a base for future propaganda policy.[68]

Initially both sides concentrated their efforts upon their own populations and towards neutrals. The war was the first modern conflict between nations and not merely between armies. Huge armed forces were needed, so mothers, wives and sweethearts had to encourage their menfolk to enlist; unprecedented quantities of ammunition and equipment were consumed, so high taxes and great exertions had to be accepted; terrible casualties were inflicted so, as Bertrand Russell put it, a nation which was to succeed had to be able to convince its people that the cause of victory was worthy of martyrdom.[69] While their armies sought in vain to achieve decisive results on the battlefields, belligerents turned part of their military efforts against one another's home fronts. The British surface fleet and German submarines blockaded their opponents, threatening starvation as well as scarcity of war materials. Zeppelins and later bombers attacked London, bringing civiliansunder fire. Populations were not subject to military cohesion and discipline, yet cohesion and discipline were vital to national survival. Propaganda was developed to conjure up these qualities within the civilian ranks of the warring nations.[70] This propaganda was almost entirely emotional in its message style. Fear and hatred of the enemy were constant themes, backed up by atrocity stories. Writing after the conflict, Harold Lasswell observed:

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67. See Charles Roetter Psychological Warfare (London, 1974).

68. Roetter, pp 30-31.

69. Bertrand Russell (ii) Power - A New Social Analysis (London, 1938), p 135.

70. See Cate Haste Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War (London, 1977).

> All the specific means of conquering the Evil One are, and should be, glorified. The cult of battle requires that every form of common exertion should have the blessing of the holy sentiments. [71]

Wars are rarely fought without cruelty and there was sufficient evidence of German excesses in 1914 and 1915 to supply propaganda for the British cause, using 'selected, credible truth'. A British Government committee investigated alleged outrages and concluded that 'murder, lust and pillage prevailed over many parts of Belgium on a scale unparalleled in any war between civilised nations during the last three centuries'.[72] The Committee's Chairman was Viscount Bryce, who was later to write so dismissively of propaganda. Facts, however, seemed insufficient to satisfy the ambitions of the British propagandists. Carried along on a tide of popular hysteria they had helped create, they turned from truth to falsehood, winning short-term victories at the cost of moral corruption and long-term disgrace. The story of the German 'corpse factory', in which dead bodies were supposedly boiled down into fat and soap, illustrated the depths of this deception.[73] Reports from the front were distorted by jingoistic optimism, and rigid censorship contributed its share in the suppression of truth. It was towards the end of the second year of this war that militant Republicans in Dublin rose in rebellion against the United Kingdom Government.

This Rising, the second case study, led by men who had probably never studied the works of Michael Bakunin, provides a remarkable example of the power of facts to give reality to ideas. The 'propaganda of the deed' of Easter Week remains a classic illustration, and deals mainly with the mobilisation phase of a revolution that was

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71. Harold D Lasswell (iii) Propaganda Technique in the World War (London, 1927), pp 96-97.

72. HM Government Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages (London, 1915), p 48.

73. Ponsonby, Chapter XVII. See also James Morgan Read Atrocity Propaganda 1914-1919 (New York, 1972).

not to become effective until 1919. The Easter Rising changed the course of Irish history. For those who see that event as the beginning of the end of British imperialism, it was an historic landmark for Britain too. Nevertheless, at the time this Irish upheaval was soon forgotten by England and her Allies, as the far greater conflict absorbed all interest.

Four propaganda successes can be taken as examples of work in this field during World War I. The first was aimed at a neutral, and involved the slow but sure seduction of American public opinion by the British, towards their taking sides with the Allies.[74] The Germans provided the second, involving a combined propaganda and political offensive to take Russia out of the war. Russian prisoners who were due to be exchanged were first inspired with revolutionary fervour against the Tzarist regime. Later, Lenin was returned to Russia from exile in a sealed train, so that he might use his influence to stop the Russians fighting.[75] The Germans thus made effective defeatist peace propaganda inside an enemy country, by using enemy nationals to do the job for them on home soil. A third example was the Allied campaign to subvert the loyalty of non-German and non-Magyar subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This worked so well that the forces which had defeated the Italians at Caporetto and advanced to the banks of the Piave, were never capable of resuming their attack, two-thirds of the Austro-Hungarian forces being by that time 'unreliable'.[76] Here, the seeds of disaffection were there all the time, waiting to be watered. Fourthly, there was the propaganda offensive of 1918, in which the Americans played an important role, designed to accelerate the collapse of Germany herself.

In February 1918 M Henri Moysset was the French delegate at a conference held in London to co-ordinate Allied propaganda efforts. Addressing the British, US and Italian representatives, Moysset called for a systematic Allied propaganda offensive, 'a war of ideas against Germany as a corollary of military resistance to her attack'.[77] He

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74. See H C Peterson Propaganda for War - the Campaign against American Neutrality 1914-1917 (Oklahoma, 1939) and James Duane Squires British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917 (Harvard, 1935).

75. Roetter, pp 74-75.

76. Roetter, pp 76-79.

77. H W Steed Through Thirty Years (London, 1924), Vol II, Chapter XV.

recommended that disruptive, revolutionary and defeatist appeals should be directed against Germany's weaker allies, followed by direct attacks on German morale. He went on to say that it was not enough to stress such negative themes as German war guilt: what was wanted was a 'positive formulation of public right and the Law of Nations superior to the German conception of Kultur'.[78] This approach saw political policy being fashioned in consultation with propagandists who would advise not only on the likely effects of policy upon public opinion at home and abroad, but also on the possible effects of public opinion upon future policy. It also perceived the need for an acceptable Allied ideology - a consensus of war aims - that could justify the war effort and counter hostile idealistic appeals. This idea later took form in President Wilson's 'Fourteen Point' formulation, being supported by the President's close adviser and propaganda chief, George Creel.

After the war there was a tendency in Germany to use Allied propaganda as a scapegoat for the nation's military defeat. In fact this psychological campaign had become effective only after Ludenorff's spring offensive had opened the eyes of German troops to the superior rations and equipment available to the Allies, thus destroying their faith in what their leaders had told them,[79] and after the military counter-offensive had destroyed German hope of victory.[80] Allied propaganda aimed at the enemy no longer needed to spread new ideas: it had only to intensify existing trends towards defeatism. Nevertheless Ludendorff's war memoires would have us believe that propaganda was effective in spite of German military strength[81] and most of what Hitler had to say on this subject in Mein Kampf was in praise of English and condemnation of German propaganda efficiency in that war.[82] These and other writings tended to boost the esteem of

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78. Ibid.

79. Barry Pitt 1918, The Last Act (London, 1962), pp 150-151.

80. See George G Bruntz Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918 (Stanford, 1938).

81. See Ludendorff My War Memories 1914-1918 (2 Vols) (London, written 1919, no date).

82. Hitler, pp 160-163.

British, French and American propagandists and to confer an inflated reputation for success upon propaganda as a weapon against enemies. In the democracies there was a post-war reaction against the idea of propaganda once the extent of deception became widely known. Propaganda became a dirty word.

Between the wars motion pictures and radio joined the ranks of communications media that could be used to deal out propaganda. The film, combining the effects of moving images and sound, produces in skilful hands the appearance of absolute reality. The radio can carry the spoken word into living rooms and it can cross oceans and national borders with an easy stride. Moreover it is possible to mislead an audience as to the source of a radio broadcast.

These new weapons of mass persuasion were seized upon by the revolutionary, totalitarian political leaders who were to dominate the inter-war years: in post-revolutionary Russia, Lenin (and later, Stalin); in Italy, Mussolini; in Germany, Hitler. As each in turn seized or consolidated power, he sought to control the thoughts of his subjects by, on the one hand, continuous or 'saturation' propaganda and, on the other, complete insulation from any unwelcome fact or opinion. In all cases propaganda was backed up by state terror, designed to deter or crush dissent. 'Organisation' played an important part in this process, involving people in groups and leading them into acts which committed them to the party and its propaganda. The totalitarian's ability to insulate his domestic audience from outside opinion and to present unchallenged versions of history, current events and future aspirations has given apparent strength to his propaganda. However, although a public exposed to such saturation techniques will lose all resistance, it will also require ever greater stimulus for ever weaker response. Furthermore, people may develop the ability to believe with one part of their minds while rejecting with another, and in time to form a subconscious scepticism of all public announcements. Total state censorship also runs counter to the spirit of free enquiry essential to science and technology. Conflicts of interest between the political need to protect the 'noble lie', and the practical needs of progress can arise. Nevertheless, as events in World War II were to show, the integration propaganda of such states can be remarkably strong. To external audiences, too, propaganda exciting respect for the ideology and achievements of the

ruling party can make progress, particularly when it is unchallenged. In his account of Britain's propaganda against Germany in World War II Dr Charles Cruickshank has noted how, prior to the outbreak of war, 'the Nazis might pour out oceans of anti-British propaganda without a murmur of protest from Westminster, but the merest threat of a droplet in reply had to be defended (by our ambassador) to the Führer'.[83] The discrediting of propaganda after 1918 had led to a situation where neither politicians nor officials knew or wished to know anything about it.

> The mandarins of Whitehall believed that propaganda to enemy countries was an idea that should be swept under the carpet until war had started ... the three most influential civil servants of the day, for reasons which in retrospect seem to be entirely unconvincing, refused to give Tallents (the man selected for the task) his head. Propaganda was a dirty word and the less it was thought about before hostilities started the better.[84]

In the Soviet Union integration propaganda was evidently slow to gain widespread acceptance, hence Lenin's resort to the starvation of the peasants and Stalin's reign of terror in the 1930s. To the external audience, informed by local communist party spokesmen, the 'glittering generalities' of Russian appeals - peace, progress and equality - sometimes seemed irresistible. In America,

> the Stalinised Communist Party appealed to some strange corner of the intellectual's brain - a roped off region in which he sought relief from the critical thinking and questioning which are the intellectual's raison d'etre, in which he sought the comfort of declared truth and security of submission. Under Marx's wing and Stalin's watchful eye, the intellectual could, in the name of the coming millennium, lay down his burden of doubt.[85]

World War II seemed to provide strong evidence in support of Parkinson's contention that propaganda begins and ends at home. Backed by organisation and discipline, integration propaganda kept Nazi

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83. Charles Cruickshank The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare 1938-45 (London, 1977), p 10.

84. Cruickshank, pp 178-179.

85. Norman F Cantor Age of Protest (London, 1970), p 153.

Germany and Imperial Japan fighting long after all rational hopes of victory must have faded. Weakness in this area may have been a prime cause of France's defeat in 1940, and it certainly threatened Soviet Russia with disaster one year later. Stalin appreciated just in time the need to mobilise his people to the defence of their country. In place of turgid sermons on Marxist-Leninism Soviet propagandists provided stirring tales of the great Russian soldier-heroes, Nevsky, Suvorov, Donskoi, Kutozov and Pozharky, and the struggle became the 'Great Patriotic War'. Religion was freed from persecution in exchange for Orthodox Church support for the war effort.[86] This new propaganda, backed by Beria's terror, stemmed the flow of desertions and, once mobilised, the Russian people fought valiantly. For Britain, the tone of internal propaganda was set in May 1940 by the new Prime Minister with his 'blood, toil, tears and sweat'.[87] Britain was successful in keeping alive the spirit of resistance in German-occupied territories, using the 'underground' organisations in those countries to amplify messages. Towards neutrals, British appeals were also remarkably effective, gaining from a policy of truthfulness.

In contrast, propaganda aimed by all belligerents at 'enemies' was weak. Germany and Japan tried familiar ploys to undermine Allied servicemen's morale. British tommies' wives were in bed with American coloured GIs; Americans were being sacrificed on Europe's behalf; the anti-malarial drug atabrine robbed soldiers of their sexual potency. But neither William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw) nor Mrs D'Aquino (Tokyo Rose) achieved deep or lasting results. The same may be said of Mr Sefton Delmer's 'Black' broadcasts to German troops[88] and Captain Zacharies's appeals to the Japanese 'Peace Faction'. Hitler missed the opportunity offered in 1941 to exploit dissension inside Russia. Once Soviet internal propaganda had taken

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86. Daugherty and Janowitz, pp263-273

87. Quoted Charles Eade (Ed) The War Speeches of Winston Churchill (London, 1951), Vol I, p 181. (Speech to the House, 13 May 1940)

88. For a critical view of these activities, see Cruickshank, op cit.

hold, it was too late, and Nazi appeals could not penetrate communist organisation.

Allied chances of winning psychological victories over Germany and Japan were additionally handicapped by the policy of the principal political leaders, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, which demanded 'unconditional surrender'. Experience in World War I had shown that, in spite of its inherent difficulties, propaganda against enemies could become effective once defeat stared them in the face, once there were overwhelming facts to support it. However 'unconditional surrender' and the 'Morgenthau Plan' for the destruction of German industry succeeded, in the words of a senior American psychological planner, in putting 'the iron of desperate resistance into the Germans, Japanese and Italians'.[89] In the first great war President Wilson had accepted advice from his Head of Propaganda, George Creel. In the second conflict neither Roosevelt nor Churchill heeded their propaganda experts. A senior British operator wrote of the Prime Minister: 'Unfortunately for us, this great man, himself our greatest propagandist, attached at best a secondary importance to all forms of propaganda'.[90]

Although British propaganda in World War II went a long way towards obliterating memories of its previous over-indulgence in falsehood, with the end of hostilities the subject was once again swept under the carpet. Perhaps because Allied work in this field was sufficiently skilful to avoid propagandist appearances, while the German, Italian and Japanese efforts were blatant, the word assumed an even more unpleasant, totalitarian association in people's minds. Moreover in most liberal democracies the organisations and staffs that ran propaganda operations in the war disappeared completely as these nations demobilised. Tiny cells concerned with various 'information' functions remained, scattered in several ministries, generally lacking political sponsors and official support. For the most part the experts returned to civilian life, leaving politicians, civil servants and servicemen as ignorant on the subject as if the war had never been. Propaganda was once again a dirty word.

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89. Robert Sherwood Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York, 1948), p 695.

90. Robert H Bruce Lockhart Comes the Reckoning (London, 1947), p 127.

The third case study begins in the last years of World War II and ends with the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948. It deals with the propaganda of Zionism, which in certain respects seems to have taken charge of the events it was supposed to support. The study also serves to demonstrate how completely Britain lost her capacity in this field, once the war-time apparatus disappeared, and when the issue involved was no longer seen as vital to the national interest. Britain's withdrawal from India and Palestine marked the beginning of a process lasting a quarter of a century during which all the great European colonial empires came to an end. The remarkable myth of the empire 'on which the sun never sets' faded once the home country no longer believed in it and when nationalism provided a stronger myth. Withdrawal was sometimes accomplished with commonsense and dignity, and sometimes in confusion and bloodshed. Palestine was in the second category, as was France's removal from Algeria some years later. Algeria forms our fourth study, illustrating the power of propaganda as a weapon in the hands of the military as well as the revolutionaries.

Throughout the post-war period Soviet propaganda has continued on its uncertain course, achieving since Stalin's death a higher degree of success inside Russia, rather doubtful success in the captive nations of Eastern Europe, and a mixture of brilliance and disaster in its dealing with various external audiences. More impressive has been the propaganda of revolutionary China. During the civil war the peasants were organised by the communists into 'Peasant Unions' and directed by an 'alternative government' at all levels. Mao Tse-tung developed the 'horizontal' process of mass education, which employs organisation to spread the message outwards, face-to-face, like ripples on a pond. The Army was seen by Mao as 'an armed organisation fulfilling the political tasks of the revolution ... The Red Army does not make war for war's sake: this is a war of propaganda in the midst of the masses'.[91] Another great source of propaganda in the post-war era has been nationalism, accompanying the de-colonisation process. Both America and Russia supported this movement for their own reasons but, through what may be seen as a

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91. Quoted Ellul (i), p 306.

demonstration of the superior power of communist psychological manipulation, the end product has been the attachment of the 'imperialist' label to America, even though it was Russia that expanded and consolidated what to all intents and purposes is her own new empire over the same period.

The campaign to condemn America for imperialist policies was of course assisted enormously by that country's involvement in Indo-China. By the 1960s, when this commitment began, television had overtaken radio and newspapers as the principal means of influencing public opinion in those developed nations where sets were owned by most families. As American troops were sent into battle their actions and sometimes their deaths were seen shortly afterwards by millions of viewers at home. The US failure in Vietnam has sometimes been attributed to the domestic news media, which, it is argued, destroyed public confidence both in the style of the campaign and in its hopes of success. A rider is often added or implied to the effect that this was a deliberate act of subversion carried out by politically motivated journalists and editors. Research has been carried out by Mr Peter Braestrup on one key period, the Tet offensive of 1968 and its aftermath. Braestrup concludes:

> In overall terms, the performance of the major American television and print news organisations during February and March 1968 constitutes an extreme case. Rarely has contemporary crisis-journalism turned out, in retrospect, to have veered so widely from reality. Essentially, the dominant themes of the words and film from Vietnam (rebroadcast in commentary, editorials, and much political rhetoric at home) added up to a portrait of defeat for the allies. Historians, on the contrary, have concluded that the Tet offensive resulted in a severe military-political setback for Hanoi in the south. To have portrayed such a setback for one side as a defeat for the other - in a major crisis abroad - cannot be counted as a triumph for American journalism. 92

Analysing the reasons for the media's failure Braestrup points to four important factors. The first was the Johnson Administration's 1967 attempt to convince the media, and hence American and world opinion, of 'progress' in Vietnam. News reporters who did not share this perception became suspicious and resentful at what they saw as

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92. Peter Braestrup Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington (2 vols) (Boulder, USA, 1977) Vol I, p 705.

manipulation and half-truths. Official 'credibility' was low. Second was the contrast between the nature of the conflict before Tet and the events accompanying that offensive. Whereas previously Saigon and other main cities had been secure havens, with the fighting confined to remote rural areas, suddenly violence was present, so it seemed, everywhere. This was completely unexpected, particularly in view of recent official pronouncements, and put many newsmen into a state of shock. 'The sudden penetration of downtown Saigon by Vietcong Sapper teams impacted personally on correspondents' lives. The geographical dispersion of the concurrent communist attacks elsewhere in the country led to uncertainty among newsmen about the enemy's intent, strength, and degree of success in the countryside.'[93]

The third factor affecting the media response arose out of the combined effects of the two already mentioned. 'As several Washington reporters later noted, the primary reaction of many newsmen in the capital after Tet was to indulge in retribution for prior manipulation by the Administration ... to a rare degree the initial coverage reflected subjective reactions by newsmen - not only to the sights and circumstances of Tet itself, but also the Administration's past conduct.'[94] Fourthly, once the story of military disaster started to appear, the herd instinct among journalists asserted itself. This was the 'Big Story': not to report it in these terms would be to court editorial disfavour. The conventions and habits of the profession encouraged simplification, the reduction of complicated and multi-sided issues to 'stories', and the competition between rival television companies, newspapers and magazines tended towards exaggeration. Many reporters 'were adventurers and, to some extent, voyeurs'[95] who concentrated on the dramatic and neglected the wider picture. 'The media in Vietnam committed major sins of omission as time went on.'[96] The dangers inherent in critical (and in this case ill-informed) war reporting, that had hovered over the horizon since the Crimea, had finally turned a military success into a disaster.

Braestrup is satisfied that 'ideology, per se, played a relatively minor role in the media treatment of the Tet crisis.'[97] In

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93. Braestrup, p 706.
94. Braestrup, p 708.
95. Braestrup, p 712.
96. Braestrup, p 712.
97. Braestrup, p 707.

other words few, if any, of the journalists who reported misleadingly and the managers and editors who, like those of Newsweek, called for a negotiated peace, were working for the other side. What has not yet been researched, and may be impossible to prove to anyone's satisfaction, is the extent to which many of those media people were already under the influence of communist propaganda before Tet, and were unconsciously conditioned towards an acceptance of the main propaganda themes of the inevitability and justice of North Vietnamese victory, the immorality of America's role and methods, and the benefits that would flow for all mankind the moment the United States withdrew. Perhaps it might be argued that North Vietnamese propaganda had sufficient truth on its side to justify widespread acceptance by a nation traditionally dedicated to the defence of the truth.

Whatever interpretations are drawn from the Vietnamese tragedy, the impression that gained wide acceptance in the politico-military circles of the Western World during and after the struggle was that the power of the media could seriously diminish the ability of liberal democracies to defend themselves. It was argued that while the totalitarian could wage war or revolution in the safe knowledge that nothing disagreeable would be seen or heard by his domestic audience, the free society's will to resist could be broken by instant and continual exposure to the horrors inseparable from conflict. How much of this attitude was due to over-reaction in the face of what proved to be an impossible military dilemma, and how much of it reflected the truth, it is difficult at this stage to say.

It was while these ideas were gathering full strength that civil strife broke out in Northern Ireland, leading in 1971 to a Republican insurgency aimed at breaking the tie with Britain. A nine-month period of this conflict ending in March 1972 forms the subject of the fifth study. Here the revolutionary propaganda formed the main component of the attack, with violence thrown in mainly as a means of psychological manipulation. Facts were provided daily as the basis of persuasion, and the role of the media in the interpretation of these events was vital to both sides. It was a battle for public opinion fought under the shadow of Vietnam.

The same can be said of the last case study, only here the remoteness of the setting and the relative backwardness of many of those involved restricted the influence of events on the external

audiences. The conflict was in the Omani province of Dhofar, beginning in the mid-1960s and ending in 1976. The effectiveness of the psychological component of this little-known campaign may cause the reader to reflect upon the preparedness of liberal democracies to respond in this area if confronted by revolutionary challenges. This is one of the questions dealt with in the final chapter which sets out to analyse deductions from the six case studies.

CHAPTER II

A TRADITION IN THE WORLD

THE REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA OF THE ASSASSINS

Introduction

The Alborz mountains that stand between Persia's central plateau and the Caspian Sea are dissected by ravines and valleys, many of them isolated from the outside world. Towards the western end of the range some vales are dominated by ruined castles. These are the Valleys of the Assassins[1], once the hub of a revolutionary movement feared throughout the Islamic World.

The visitor to Iran in the years prior to the recent upheavals would have found no mention of these relics in tourist literature, and if he made his way to the Valleys no guide would have conducted him around the crumbling fortresses[2]. The Assassins had no place in the pageant of Persian history presented to visitors by the Imperial regime. From Cyrus's tomb to the spectacular Pahlavi Stadium, and from the poet Ferdowsi's Shah Nama (The Epic of the Kings)[3] to the last Shah's Mission for my Country[4], the presentation emphasised monarchy. Threats to the Shah's authority captured the world's headlines only when they became irresistible: previously the subject of terrorism was given the minimum publicity, whether this appeared in the tangible form of the Mojahhedin-e-Khalq (People's Fighters) and Cherikaye Feyayeen-e-Khalq (People's Fedayeen Guerrillas), or in the shadowy form of medieval terrorists.

This chapter examines the revolutionaries generally known as the Assassins, with particular reference to their use of propaganda.

Historical Setting

The unity of the Muslim world foundered shortly after the Prophet's death on the question of succession. The fourth Mohammedan caliph, Ali,

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1. See Freya Stark (ii) The Valleys of the Assassins (London, 1936).
2. The writer visited the valleys and castles twice in 1974.
3. Ferdowsi The Epic of the Kings, translated Reuben Levy (London, 1967).
4. His Imperial Majesty Mohammed Reza Pahlavi Mission for my Country (London, 1961).

married and had children by the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, before being murdered in 661 AD (54 AH). His elder son, Husayn, was in turn killed by troops of the rival house, the Umayyad. Ali's other son, Hasan, reserved his claims to the caliphate rather than plunge Islam into civil war.

The great majority of Muslims accepted the subsequent change in the caliphate, which office they regarded as elective rather than divine: these are the Sunnites. But some held that only true descendants of the Prophet could inherit the temporal and spiritual powers of Mohammed and hence Ali's offspring alone could be lawful caliphs: these are the Shi'a. However the Shi'a were themselves divided over which descendant was the rightful heir. Some believed that Ali had twelve descendants, known as the Twelve Imams, of whom the twelfth, Muhammed, who disappeared about the year 873, is still living and will one day reappear to establish the Shi'ite faith throughout the world. Such are termed 'Twelve Shi'a', and their beliefs have formed the official religion of Persia since the sixteenth century. A rival group, the Ismailis, believed that Ismail, the son of the Imam Ja'far, was wrongfully deprived of his inheritance. For them Ismail was the seventh Imam rather than his younger brother accepted by the Twelvers.[5]

The fifth descendants of Ismail had succeeded by 909 in forming in Tunisia an independent Ismaili state, known as the Fatimid Caliphate. In its first half-century this caliphate's power was consolidated in the west only, in North Africa and Sicily. Its ambitions and influence were, however, directed eastwards towards the heartlands of Islam, since only by ousting the Sunni Abbasid Caliphs from their seat of power in Bagdad could the Ismailis establish sovereignty over all Islam. By 966 Egypt had been conquered and Fatimid troops were advancing across the Sinai into Palestine and Syria. The Caliph moved from Tunisia and built a new city, Cairo, as the capital of his Empire. There was erected a new mosque and university, called al-Azhar, as the citadel of the faith and ideological power-house for its missionaries, whose task it was to subvert the Sunni strongholds to the east. The Muslim state derives its sovereignty from God. No distinction is drawn between things secular and religious

5. See Peter Willey, The Castles of the Assassins, (London, 1963), Appendix A.

in law, in jurisdiction, or in authority. Consequently the Caliph was all-powerful under God, and his missionaries reflected this power in their appointed districts.

Hasan-i Sabbah

On 30 August 1078 a young middle-class Persian, a convert to Ismailism, arrived in Cairo to begin his training as a missionary: his name was Hasan-i Sabbah. The Fatimid Caliphate was at the peak of its glory and it is unlikely that anyone in Cairo doubted for one moment the permanence of the Empire and its ideology. During his three years in Egypt Hasan would have been instructed in all the arts of propaganda and leadership. He was an ardent revolutionary, a passionate seeker after knowledge, an extreme ascetic, a powerful orator, and a ruthless exponent of the art of seizing and consolidating power. Before departing from Egypt he came into conflict with the Commander of the Fatimid army, a military dictator called Badr al-Jamali. Badr's partial usurpation of power from the Caliph must have outraged the young zealot, to whom any challenge to God's authority must have seemed sacrilegious. Hasan was deported, and after surviving shipwreck he reached Isfahan on 10 June 1081, a fully qualified and licensed missionary or da'i in the service of the da'wa - the Ismaili 'organisation' or 'party'.[6]

Some forty years earlier Persia had been overrun by the Seljuk Turks whose new military empire stretched from Central Asia to the Mediterranean and included virtually all the Sunni Caliphate. Instead of weakening Sunni Islam, the Seljuk invasion gave it new strength. The conquerers were recent converts, earnest, loyal and orthodox and took seriously their duty to protect and strengthen the Caliph against all threats, particularly Ismailism. At the same time the Sunni theologians countered the intellectual and emotional challenge of the Ismaili preaching with a revival of faith amongst their followers. Hasan was thus operating in his own country against the official religion and against the Seljuk rulers and security forces who were pledged to uphold orthodoxy. For the first nine years of his

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6. This Chapter draws massively on Bernard Lewis, The Assassins, A Radical Sect in Islam, (London, 1967).

mission he travelled extensively throughout Persia before turning his attention to the northern Caspian provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran and especially to the mountainous region known as Daylam, north of Qazvin. The Daylami hill tribesmen were fiercely independent, holding to the Shi'ite rather than the Sunni faith, and had already been infiltrated by Ismaili propaganda. Hasan saw these folk as politically pure water in which his revolutionary fish might safely swim, and laid his plans accordingly.

High in the Alborz mountains, on a rock which dominated the enclosed valley out of which it rose, stood the castle of Alamut. Of ancient origin, Alamut had been refurbished by an Alid ruler two hundred years before Hasan set eyes on it. The present occupant was one Mihdi, who held it for the Seljuk Sultan. By a mixture of cunning and bribery Hasan and his followers gained possession. It is said that he never again left the castle and only twice in the thirty-five years of life remaining to him did he come out of his house. 'He was occupied with reading books, committing the words of the da'wa to writing, and administering the affairs of his realm, and he lived an ascetic, abstemious, and pious life.' [7]

Even before his base in the Alborz was completely secure, Hasan sent da'is to set up comparable centres of Ismaili power in other parts of Persia. All made use of disaffected minority groups who were suffering at the hands of the Seljuk administration, and they mostly took advantage of mountainous terrain where a small but determined guerrilla force might hold out against regular troops operating in distant and unfamiliar terrain. One Ismaili base was set up in Khorasan[8] near the Afghan border, another in the south-west in the Zagros mountains near Arrajan, and a fourth in the fortress of Shadhdiz on a hill outside Isfahan. Meanwhile in Daylam, Hasan's men occupied Lamasar and Girdkuh castles, extending the main base area westward to command the important route linking Qasvin with the

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7. Rashid al-Din, Jami al-tavarikh; qusmat-i Ismailiyyan, edited Muhammad Taqi Danishpazhuh and Muhammad Mudarris, (Tehran 1338 AH) p 134. Quoted Lewis, p 44.

8. Lewis refers to 'Quhistan'. In this account the modern name, 'Khorasan', is used for this part of Iran.

Caspian coast. The infrastructure of revolt was complete. Then, just as Hasan was ready to launch his campaign, events in Cairo provided the necessary ideological spark. In the relatively short time between Hasan's indoctrination in Cairo and the completion of his ground work for rebellion in Persia, the Fatimid Empire had fallen into swift decline. A revolutionary ideology inspired by the principle of unity and authority, Ismailism suffered schism and defections and fell under military dictatorship contrary to the spiritual aspiration of its emergence. When in 1094 AD the Caliph al-Mustansir died, the movement was torn apart by the persistent issue of succession. The dictator Badr al-Jamali, intent upon consolidating his own power, appointed al-Mustansir's younger son as the new Caliph. Nizar, the rightful successor, fled to Alexandria, raised a revolt, but was later captured and murdered.

The Nizari Ismailis

Even within the Fatimid Empire there was opposition to the new Caliph. Amongst the revolutionaries operating in Sunni territories to the east, there was total rejection. Hasan-i Sabban was by this time the senior da'i in Persia directly responsible to the Chief Da'i in Cairo. Now he broke away completely, declaring his sect Nizari Ismailis, with himself as leader. His challenge to Sunni orthodoxy and the Seljuk military administration was henceforth personal and direct, and his followers everywhere rallied behind him. After the split the Fatimid propaganda was termed the 'Old Preaching', while the Nizaris proclaimed the 'New Preaching'.

Hasan's position in the Da'wa, the organisation or party of the New Preaching, was that of Hujja or 'Proof' - the source of the knowledge of the hidden Imam of the time. He delegated responsibilities to three subordinate commanders of whom the senior seems to have been the chief da'i, in charge of religious propaganda, the second was the vizier or prime minister, and the third was defence chief, responsible for the security of the base areas. Under Hasan's leadership these men presumably co-ordinated Nizari strategy. Our knowledge of the acts of the Assassins is relatively thorough, brought to us in concise form by the scholarship of Professor Bernard Lewis.[9]

9. Lewis, op cit.

From various accounts we can trace in fair detail the tactics employed. But as to the underlying strategy, we have no historical evidence and must draw our own conclusions.

The Acts of the Assassins

The military events fell into two main categories, the consolidation and defence of the base areas and the killing of effective opponents of Nizari Ismailism. Of these, the second was paramount and provided the main instrument for removing opposition to ideological indoctrination. The first victim was no less a person than the Seljuk vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, a determined opponent of Ismailism who in 1092, two years before the 'New Preaching', instigated the first military expedition against the bases in Daylam and Khorasan. Hasan selected Bu Tahir Arrani from volunteers for the task of liquidating this over-zealous official. Arrani was carefully briefed, provided with 'cover' that enabled him to pass himself off as a Sufi acceptable in the Vizier's entourage, given a consecrated dagger, and assured of the righteousness of his task and the certainty of eternal bliss should its accomplishment involve his own death. Over all these ingredients was poured a kind of adhesive that bound together the agent, the plan, and its execution - secrecy. This element was part and parcel of Nizari Ismailism, which was a secret backdrop for terrorism. The mission succeeded. Arrani drew his dagger while the Vizier was being borne in his litter to the tent of his women. Hasan remarked: 'The killing of this devil is the beginning of bliss.'[10]

The men who undertook such missions comprised the elite of the Ismaili military wing and were known as fida'is. They were the 'hit men' or 'killer squads' of the Da'wa, highly motivated, well trained, dependable. Sometimes they operated singly, more often in pairs or larger groups. Daggers were invariably used. Not infrequently, against important, high risk targets, several such groups would be

10. Rashid al-Din, p 110, quoted Lewis, p 47. (Hasan's remark is remarkably similar to the exultant reactions attributed to the Italian Red Brigade terrorist leader, Renato Curcio, after Aldo Moro had been found murdered.)

sent out simultaneously to accomplish one mission. Speed, it would seem, was not of the essence. If it took months or years for the fida'i to get into position for a kill, that did not matter. The vital element was reliability: once the decision to kill a particular individual had been made, the Movement's credibility depended upon there being no escape for the victim. An ode in praise of three fida'is, written at the time, probably in Alamut castle, expresses it thus:

> Who was he in the world who dared to show impudence towards this Authority and who has not lost his life?
> These cursed enemies of God do not realise that their life and authority is approaching its limits, that
> Every one who thinks of opposing the Lord of the Universe, is punished by the fate by violent death.
> The chosen prophets preached and warned people about this from the beginning, that such is the promised punishment. [11]

Before Hasan's own death in 1124 nearly 50 victims died, more than half in the first ten years of his campaign. The dead included the Mufti of Isfahan, the Prefect of Bayhaq, the Qadis of Isfahan and Nishapur, and the Vizier-cum-military chief in Cairo, all too eager or outspoken in their opposition to the New Preaching. Hasan's successors continued the same policy. Buzurgumid, the second Hujja, sent two killers after another vizier, Mu'in al-Din Kashi, who had urged Sultan Sanjar to attack the Assassins' bases. Disguised as grooms, the agents used their daggers when summoned to advise the vizier on the choice of horses. In 1139 a large group of Nizari Ismailis entered the camp of Sultan Mas'ud where the Caliph of Baghdad, titular head of Sunni Islam, was being held in protective custody. They murdered him without a second's thought, since such chances were rare. The Caliph seems to have been an opportunity target, in contrast to the carefully selected victims pursued remorselessly by dedicated killer squads. In Alamut the news of the murder was received with rejoicing and the Hujja announced seven days and nights official celebration - the traditional gesture of

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11. 'Ode by Hasan in Praise of Three Fidawis', translated W Ivanow, (i), Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol 14, 1938 pp 63-72, lines 23-26.

appreciation after a better than average kill. Buzurgumid's other victims included the prefects of Isfahan and Tabriz, a governor of Maragha, and a mufti of Qasvin. Those selected came mainly from two categories; Seljuk princes, officers and ministers, and Sunni qadis and other religious functionaries. Shi'ites were rarely attacked, nor were rank and file Sunnis. It was from these classes that the Da'is sought their converts.

Buzurgumid was succeeded by his son, Muhammad, whose score was a meagre fourteen assassinations. This declining application of Hasan's methods continued throughout the reigns of Muhammad's son, another Hasan, Muhammad II, Jalal al-Din Hasan, Ala al-Din and the last ruler of Alamut, Rukn al-Din Khurshah, whose death in 1258 marked the end of the Assassins' mission in Persia. The Movement was not,however, confined to that country. As early as 1102 Hasan-i Sabbah had despatched missionaries to Syria. Early attempts to operate as urban terrorists based in Aleppo and Damascus failed. Only when they were able to fortify mountain strongholds in the Daylam fashion could the Syrian comrades (rafiq) really feel secure. Many of the Movement's most spectacular kills were made by these émigré Persians and their local recruits: the ruler of Homs, while at prayer in the cathedral mosque; the Seljuk emir of Mosul; the commander of Fatimid armies in Egypt; the Fatimid Caliph himself; the first Crusader victim, Count Raymond II of Tripoli; Conrad of Montferrat and the vizier of Aleppo, to mention only the more distinguished. Two attempts, both unsuccessful, were made on the life of Saladin. The Syrian-based Assassins were effectively extinguished in 1273.

Defending the Bases

The establishment and defence of base or 'liberated' areas was a more conventional type of enterprise than the assassination campaign. The Alamut strongholds were attacked repeatedly throughout the 168 years that the Ismailis held them. Some offensives petered out for want of zeal on the part of the Seljuk attackers. Others were discontinued at the death of a sultan, when all existing policy fell apart until the ensuing power-struggle eventually threw up a new ruler. More than one besieging commander was bribed off. When in 1117 the Sultan's direct assaults failed, he turned to a policy of food denial. 'For eight

consecutive years', recorded the Persian historian Juvayni, 'the troops came to Rudbar and destroyed the crops ...'.[12] This was evidently the correct tactic, for 'in their (the Assassins') castles there was a great famine and the people lived on grass'.[13] But once again the Nizaris were saved by the death in Isfahan of the Sultan, whereupon the troops dispersed, leaving all their stores, arms and implements to their foes.

In Khorasan the Seljuk forces fared a little better, succeeding on some occasions in clearing the Ismailis from parts of their base area. But no thorough-going clearing-up operation was ever mounted, with the result that the Assassins were always able to infiltrate back and re-establish their ascendancy. Elsewhere in Persia the Seljuk security forces were able to crush the Assassins. Bases in the Zagros and near Isfahan both fell in 1107, the latter holding out longer than might otherwise have been the case by the imaginative use of psychological warfare.

Sultan Muhammad Tapar laid siege to Shahdiz castle outside Isfahan on 2 April, but this event had already been delayed five weeks by false reports of external threats - a deception plan put about by Nizari agents in the Sultan's camp. When the siege began to hurt, the Assassin leader Ibn Attash managed to promote a religious controversy. He had it put to the Sultan that their differences were unimportant and did not justify war between Moslems, even though they differed over the Imamate. This argument impressed many of the Sultan's advisors and introduced a measure of ambivilance into Seljuk thought and action. When this argument was eventually rejected, the Nizaris played on humanitarian sentiments. They would agree to quit Shahdiz if the Sultan provided for their safety from mob vengeance by giving them another fortress in the vicinity. Negotiations finally broke down when the Nizaris failed to resist the temptation to 'rub out' the emir most eloquently denouncing their proposal. When Shahdiz had finally been conquered, Ibn Attash was paraded through the

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12. Ata Malik Juvayni, Ta'rikh-i Jahan-gusha, edited Mirza Muhammad Qazvini, translated into English by J A Boyle as The History of the World-Conqueror (2 Vols) (Manchester, 1958) Vol II, p 681.

13. Juvayni, Vol II, p 681.

streets of Isfahan before he was flayed alive, his skin stuffed with straw, and his head sent to Baghdad. It was the end of Nizari military power in that region, and in consequence the security of the castles in Daylam was more than ever vital to the New Preaching.

Appreciating the increased strategic importance of his main base area, Buzurgumid in 1127 had an additional castle built, midway between Alamut and Lamasar, called Maymundiz. This is the only important defence work constructed from scratch by the Nizaris, all their other castles being seized from previous occupants. It shows the same originality in design as the style of their campaign. Instead of building upwards on the summit of a hill, the Assassins chose a near vertical mountainside, and built horizontally into it, anticipating by some 800 years the great defensive works 'Maginot' and 'Siegfried'. With its entrances half-way between the foot and peak of the tall escarpment, and with ladders easily withdrawn by the occupants, Maymundiz presented a baffling problem to any attacker.[14]

Defeat

The strongholds of Daylam proved invulnerable to all assaults by the Seljuks. But early in the thirteenth century a new power arose from the north-east beside which the Seljuks seemed puny - the Mongols. In 1219 Genghiz Khan led his army across the River Jaxartes. By 1221 he had captured the Muslim cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, crossed the river Oxus, taken Balkh, Marv and Nishapur and much of eastern Persia. Genghiz died in 1227 but three years later his successor continued the march of conquest and by 1240 the Mongols had overrun western Persia and were invading Georgia, Armenia and Mesopotamia. The Assassin strongholds were surrounded by the Golden Horde.[15] The last Hujja, Rukn al-Din Khurshah, knew power when he saw it, and he saw it clearly in these heathen Mongol invaders. He decided that, rather than

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14. For a description of Maymundiz see Willey, Op cit.

15. A C Ashworth and others have concluded that Genghis Khan's armies were never numerically overwhelming but encouraged rumours as to their invincible strength for psychological reasons. Another interpretation might attribute the 'horde' legend to vanquished commanders seeking exoneration. See Ashworth, op cit.

resist, he would attempt a deal with Hulegu, Genghiz's grandson, who in 1256 was ordered to crush Nizari defiance.

Rukn al-Din opened his diplomacy with a message to the Mongol commander in Hamadan, offering to 'tread the path of submission and scrape the dust of disaffection from the countenance of loyalty'.[16] In fact his intentions were less straightforward. Hulegu expressed willingness to accept submission, provided the Assassins destroyed their castles and Rukn al-Din came to him in person. The Hujja evidently thought he could spin out negotiations and retain his base area more or less intact, bending before the wind without being uprooted. However for Hulegu, submission had to be total and unconditional. While Rukn al-Din dithered in Maymundiz, Hulegu's army entered the Valley and took up positions around the three castles.

Rukn al-Din's conditional offer of surrender was fatal to prospects of determined defence, and his unwillingness to fulfil the conditions stipulated by Hulegu was equally fatal to hopes for a congenial surrender. He did eventually give himself up to the besiegers and was initially well received by Hulegu. But when the Hujja had used his influence to induce most of the fortresses in Daylam and Khorasan to surrender and when it was clear that his authority could not end resistance by the garrisons of Lamasar and Girdkuh, his usefulness to the Mongols was at an end. The Persian historian Juvayni described the final act: 'He and his followers were kicked to a pulp and then put to the sword: and of him and his stock no trace was left, and he and his kindred became but a tale on men's lips and a tradition in the world.'[17]

Once the citadel had fallen the movement lost its purpose, fragmented, and became a minor sect in Islam. The main surviving heirs of the Assassins are the Khoja community of India, with the Aga Khan as spiritual head.

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16. Juvayni, Vol II, p 712-3.
17. Juvayni, Vol II, pp 724-5.

Reflections on the Assassins' Possible Strategy

The tactics adopted by the Assassins might be seen as the first phase of classic guerrilla warfare strategy as demonstrated in this century by Mao Tse-tung. In this model the base areas would have spawned guerrilla armies to operate throughout the country. Areas cleared of Seljuk influence would have been ruled by an 'alternative government' claiming the allegiance of the whole nation. Finally, when the security forces were sufficiently weakened, an expanded guerrilla force would have challenged the Seljuk army in open battle. If Hasan-i Sabbah and his successors did have this strategy in mind, they never progressed beyond Stage I - the establishment of base areas and small scale guerrilla attacks. However in view of the confident and protracted character of Assassin operations it seems unlikely that they were forever stuck in a preliminary phase. Another possible strategy would have used terror as the decisive weapon. Attrition by assassination, particularly amongst the Seljuk leadership, wear and tear on nerves from living in perpetual fear and uncertainty, inability to control a deteriorating situation, the 'climate of collapse' - all this might have led to surrender. Although this type of terrorist activity may have been important to the overall plan, it seems improbable that the murders themselves constituted the prime threat to Seljuk rule. Even pusillanimous regimes tend to resist such pressures, growing tougher in the process, and however wearing the threat of assassination may have been it is unlikely that this alone would have posed a credible threat to established authority.

If neither clash of arms nor reign of terror was to bring about the triumph of the New Preaching, what was? The answer is surely to be found in the question itself, in the words 'New Preaching'. Nizari Ismailism was first and foremost a messianic creed, the fulfilment of God's purpose on earth. At the same time it provided a means of undermining a hated domination, and a release of pent-up forces of passion, devotion and social aspiration. Perhaps the ideological conversion of the people was the cornerstone of Nizari strategy, and the evidence available of propaganda methods, set out below, tends to support this view. Subversion would reach through all classes of the

population, into the administration, the army and the Seljuk leadership itself. One day the Sultan would awake to find he was ruling a Nizari Ismaili Kingdom, at which moment his power would evaporate. Violence may have acted in support of this mission, without being seen as the decisive instrument. This interpretation helps us to make sense of the acts of the Assassins, and it may also guide us towards an understanding of why their cause never achieved more than partial success.

Propaganda among the Persian masses must have required a great number of da'is. We read very little about the work of these subversive missionaries, infiltrating the villages and cities, bazaars, and homes of Persian Sunnites. They must have proclaimed the New Preaching mainly by face-to-face propaganda, since overt addresses to crowds and assemblies would have provoked immediate action by the religious and military authorities. Small secret gatherings of converts in 'safe houses' no doubt took place, against the constant risk of infiltration by government agents, or discovery by treachery or poor security. The remorseless nature of this subversion, and its success, would have been a source of severe anxiety and hatred to the orthodox, partly because it posed a threat that military power could not counter, and partly because of that special fanaticism with which any religion opposes heresy, a far more fearful and vindictive hate than anything expended upon the heathen.

We get some idea of the numbers of Nizari converts from reports of spasmodic pogroms organised by the Seljuks, usually in revenge for some assassination. Abbas, the governor of Ravy, ordered such a massacre and is said to have built a tower of Ismaili skulls. So did the ruler of Mazandaran. When the loyal population of Isfahan demanded effective security force action against the Assassin bases, action that was easier proposed than accomplished, the Sultan appeased them by permitting or encouraging a massacre of converts in the city. Officers, equally frustrated by lack of a decisive counter-insurgency policy, led their troops in support of the citizens in the hunt for suspects. Since Nizari security was good and the identities of converts uncertain, legal and humanitarian considerations were overlooked in the thirst for vengeance. Suspects were rounded up, taken to the great square, and put to death. Clearly, if converts or

suspected converts were there to be killed in large numbers, the impact of the Nizari propaganda must have been considerable. It is hardly surprising that the Sunni historians of the time left no records of conversions. No ideology likes to admit to the possibility of a stronger ideal.

The training of da'is in sufficient numbers and over the time-scale of a prolonged campaign made a necessity of secure base areas, particularly the main ideological centre at Alamut. Killer squads could, with difficulty, have operated from urban hideouts whereas a seminary for large scale missionary teaching could not. If the bases were never intended to be used as springboards for a large scale guerrilla campaign, their remoteness would have posed no problems to their ideological incumbents, though making difficulties for armies sent to conquer them.

The supporting role allotted to the fida'is can be likened to that of naval escorts charged with ensuring the safe passage of a great ship: they were to remove all dangers from its course. Whereas the navy would be concerned with mines, submarines and surface attack, the fida'is dealt with princes, military commanders, teachers and religious leaders who interfered with the work of the da'is or closed the minds of the people to indoctrination. The roots of regicide and tyrannicide lie buried in ancient history and the practice of killing the unrighteous was established in Islamic tradition long before Hasan-i Sabbah's day. As early as 661 AD (54 AH) the Kharijite murder of the Caliph Ali was glorified thus:

> O blow delivered by a God-fearing man who desired with it nothing but the satisfaction of the master of the Throne!
> On the day I shall invoke his name and I am certain that of all creation he will weigh most heavily in the scales of the Lord. [18]

Hasan's strategy involved harnessing what had hitherto been a rare and special religious obligation to kill to a sustained form of warfare. The killing by an Assassin of a victim selected by the Organisation was always an act of piety. By long and thorough indoctrination, the fida'is believed utterly in the righteousness of their actions and in

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18. Poem by Qatari b. al-Fuja'a quoted in Gustave E von Grunebaum, Medieval Islam, (Chicago, 1954) p 122.

the certainty of salvation in the event of their being killed in action. By long and arduous military training, the same men possessed the skills, qualities and strength that ensured success. Assassin propaganda loaded the dice so that whether a fida'i perished or survived in the course of an operation, the Movement was able to benefit. Death brought the pious executioner immediate and eternal bliss in the next world and a place of honour on the roll of martyrs in Alamut. Survival provided scope for mocking the impotence of authority. Hasan's Ode recorded:

> None of these warriors for the cause of the sacred Word received any injury in this affair from the arms of the enemy.
> All three came back, with the help of the Qa'im, bringing victory and happiness to all sides. 19

The choice of a victim seemed to be governed by two considerations; the elimination of the particular functionary who stood in the way, the direct physical effect, and the terrorising of others against following the same course, the indirect propaganda effect.[20] There is ample evidence to show that the propaganda pay-off was often great. Fear of being next on the list prompted elaborate security measures, which themselves discredited authority and advertised the Assassins' prowess, and many important individuals, impressed by the fida'is' proven ability to penetrate even the most thorough security screen, bought their safety by adopting an ambivilant or frankly passive attitude towards Nizari Ismailism. After the da'is had converted some Seljuk troops, 'No commander or officer dared to leave his house unprotected; they wore armour under clothes, and even the vizier Abu'l-Hasan wore a mail shirt under his clothes'.[21] The ex-Caliph al-Rajhid probably believed himself secure while recuperating in Isfahan, attended only by his trusted servants. Only when death was upon him did he discover that some of his

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19. Ode by Hasan, lines 20-21.

20. Which corresponds with the ancient Chinese dictum 'Kill one, frighten ten thousand'.

21. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi'l-ta'rikh, edited by C J Tornberg, (Leiden-Upsala, 1851-76), Vol X, p 220, quoted Lewis, p 51.

employees were in fact fida'is. Saladin's two narrow escapes caused him thereafter to sleep in a specially constructed wooden tower.

This climate of fear and grudging respect for Assassin efficiency sometimes obviated the need for violence. Many were the tactical alliances, tacit or acknowledged, that cleared the road to Nizari Ismailism. Sometimes it was necessary to coerce. 'Hasan-i Sabbah would send ambassadors to seek peace but his offers were not accepted. He then by all manner of wiles bribed certain of the Sultan's courtiers to defend him before the Sultan; and he suborned one of his eunuchs with a large sum of money and sent him a dagger, which was stuck in the ground beside the Sultan's bed one night when he lay in a drunken sleep. When the Sultan awoke and saw the dagger he was filled with alarm but not knowing whom to suspect he ordered the matter to be kept secret. Hasan-i Sabbah then sent a messenger with the following message: "Did I not wish the Sultan well, that dagger which was stuck into the hard ground would have been planted in his soft breast". The Sultan took flight and from then on inclined towards peace with them ... In short, during his reign they enjoyed ease and tranquility.' [22] As with princes, so with academics. In his lectures to theological students the great Sunni theologian Fakhr al-Din specifically attacked Nizari Ismailism, undermining the da'is' propaganda. The reader will hardly need to be told that a fida'i was despatched from Alamut to deal with him.

According to the story[23], the assassin joined Fakhr al-Din's class and bided his time. After seven months he found an excuse to see his teacher alone in his study. Drawing his dagger, he threw the older man to the ground, sat upon him, and cursed him for insulting the New Preaching. After extracting a solemn undertaking from Fakhr al-Din that he would revise his sermons, the fida'i produced a bag containing 365 gold dinars. These represented the first payment of an annual remittance offered by the Da'wa in exchange for the theologian's neutrality. The terrified Fakhr al-Din accepted, and

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22. Juvayni, Vol II, pp 681-2.

23. Rashid al-Din, p 170-3, quoted Lewis, pp 75-76.

thereafter dropped all offensive comment about the Nizari Ismailis. If this account is essentially accurate it demonstrates subtlety and flexibility on the part of the Assassins. Presumably they calculated that the killing of so renowned and respected a figure as Fakhr al-Din would rebound to their discredit, and they may also have foreseen the propaganda value of a sympathetic moral stance towards Ismailism by this famous teacher. Apparently it had its effect, for we are told that at some later date one of the students asked Fakhr al-Din why his views had changed. 'It is not advisable to curse the Ismailis', the theologian replied, 'for they have both weighty and trenchant arguments'.

Propaganda Methods

Our examination of possible Assassin strategies leaves one important question unanswered. If, as this study tentatively concludes, the main thrust of Nizari policy was in the direction of mass conversions to the New Preaching, what methods were used to bring about such conversions? Hasan-i Sabbah was trained as a da'i by the Ismailis and as chief of the Persian mission under that authority he undoubtedly trained his da'is in an identical fashion. The switch from the Old to the New Preaching would have involved changes in the content of the teaching by Nizari da'is. It is, however, rather unlikely that at so critical a moment Hasan would have changed their organisation and methods, which had served so well in the past. If this assumption is correct we can learn precisely how the Assassins spread their propaganda from an eleventh century document describing the ideal virtues of the Ismaili da'i.[24]

It is clear from this evidence that the responsibilities of the da'i were tremendous, and the candidate had to possess exceptional talents to be fit for the duty. Once he was appointed, however, he was given full authority. He had to use his own discretion, conforming with the general tendency and spirit of his mission, and he was not encouraged to bother his superiors with trivial and routine

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24. Sayyid-na Ahmad, The Virtues of the Da'i According to Al-Himma, translated by W Ivanow, see Note 25.

matters. With authority went responsibility for results. 'If God asks the Imam to account for the welfare of the community, the Imam refers Him to the da'i in charge, who takes upon himself the whole responsibility for this.' [25]

The document begins by stressing the high personal qualities needed by a da'i and the need for correct and zealous ideological convictions. 'The highest virtue of those who carry on propaganda in favour of the Saints of God, their greatest work, and the highest attainment - is their own righteousness arising from sincere devotion, self control based on religious feeling, convincing preaching, soul healing admonitions.'[26] The da'i was warned neither to slacken in the discharge of his duties, nor to allow his own personal example to falter. Moderate in his needs, he was required to cultivate an active mind, broad vision and indifference to his own fate, while developing inspiring leadership. The dictum that familiarity breeds contempt was applied: 'He must strictly observe his own actions so as not to give any reason to them (his converts) to treat him lightly, or lose respect to his orders ... But his imposing manners should be accompanied by a real attitude of goodwill, quiet dignity, kindness to everyone, inviting address and pleasant companionship.'[27] In short, he needed to have leadership qualities.

Within his allotted territorial or ethnic preserve (jazira, literally island) the da'i's first task was to study his community, know its affairs and aspirations, and tailor his propaganda to the consumers, 'in such a way as not to overtax the intelligence and the patience of his audience ... He must learn to observe the people, recognize the state of their minds, their abilities, extent of their endurance. This is the most important knowledge needed by the da'i for the organisation and training of his followers'.[28] In today's

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25. W Ivanow, (ii) 'The Organisation of the Fatimid Propaganda'. Article in Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol 15, (Bombay, 1939), p 4. The Article contains the translation described in Note 24.

26. Ahmad, p 15.

27. Ahmad, p 16.

28. Ahmad, p 15

terminology, he had to assess accurately the receptivity and susceptibility of his target audiences. If there were influential persons whose ideas and opinions could not safely be disregarded the da'i might make tactical alliances even if their standards and ideals were far removed from his own. The technique we now term 'entryism' was not overlooked. A da'i was encouraged to associate with local religious authorities, professing respect for their ideas of piety, so as to appear friendly and helpful, while all the time using this close association as an opportunity to divert their loyalties towards his own preaching.

Amongst the converted, the principle of 'carrot and stick' was to be applied. 'He must treat nicely those who do their best, giving them the position which they deserve according to their behaviour ... but he must punish those whose behaviour is not good, and of whose evil actions he comes to know.'[29] Punishment could be harsh. Sinners were to be excommunicated and boycotted until they begged repentance, more serious offenders would be flayed alive: 'others to be executed in some other way for their mischief ... The da'i should punish his followers for every error, leaving nothing neglected or overlooked. In this way he disciplines them'. Just as the da'i's authority over his converts was absolute, so it was his duty to preserve peace between his followers and reconcile their disputes. For an Ismaili to turn to the sultan or qadi, the secular and orthodox religious leaders respectively, was a sin deserving condemnation. Thus the established authorities for law enforcement, justice and spiritual guidance were usurped, and the 'alternative regime' began to emerge.

A follower's loyalty might be put to the test by the da'i ordering him to kill his own brother or some other relative. 'Those who are sincerely devoted must do this, however hard such orders may be. And if they do not comply, the da'i should excommunicate them. Those who sincerely obey such test orders, receive great blessing.'[30] Echoes of Abraham? Ritual murder of this kind was postulated eight centuries later by Dostoyevsky in his book The Possessed. Stavrogin explains to hesitant conspirators:

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29. Ahmad, p 17.

30. Ahmad, p 17.

> All that business of titles and sentimentalism is a very good cement, but there is something better; persuade four members of the circle to do for a fifth on the pretence that he is a traitor, and you'll tie them all together with the blood they've shed as though it were a knot. They'll be your slaves, they won't dare to rebel or call you to account. 31

The attribution of treachery to the intended victim of nineteenth century Russian revolutionaries may be seen as a concession to squeamishness that was thought either unnecessary or undesirable in a circle of secret converts to Ismailism. But the end purpose of the rite was the same - the burning of bridges by the killer and others implicated. After obeying such a command, there could be no turning back.

Although directed at today's problems, Professor Ellul's remarks on this form of propaganda are remarkably apt:

> For action makes propaganda's effect irreversible. He who acts in obedience to propaganda can never go back. He is now obliged to <u>believe</u> in that propaganda because of his past action. He is obliged to receive from it his justification and authority, without which his action will seem to him absurd and unjust, which would be intolerable ... The man who has acted in accordance with the existing propaganda has taken his place in society. From then on he has enemies. Often he has broken with his milieu or his family; he may be compromised ... 32

<u>Conclusions on Strategy</u>

It seems reasonably safe to conclude that the strategy adopted by the Assassins was remarkably similar to that of modern terrorism. Realising that a minority sect was unable to overthrow the established regime by direct armed attack, Hasan and his successors set out to subvert the loyalty of the population to the point where the old establishment could no longer function, and a take-over would be possible. This process would take time, and the propagandists also needed some form of protection against effective counter-measures.

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31. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, <u>The Possessed</u>, translated Constance Garnett, (London, 1914) p 351. (For an historical example of this type of behaviour, see Wilkinson, p 101.)

32. Ellul (i) pp 29-30.

Both were to be provided by the supporting actions of the killer squads, whose spectacular deeds would enhance the credibility of the Nizari Ismailis and diminish the legitimacy of the Seljuk government. Terror also deterred officials, soldiers and teachers from their duty. We may never know how many attacks on the Alamut bases were called off by frightened leaders or how often the work of da'is went uninterrupted for fear of vengeance, any more than we can tell how many airlines today pay protection money to Palestinian terrorist groups. We have seen, however, that in present-day Italy it can be difficult to persuade judges and jurors to serve, and that in Northern Ireland witnesses will not always come forward. Terror as a weapon of survival is common enough today, and may have accounted for the Assassins' ability to operate for so many years. If this interpretation is correct then it upsets the generally accepted wisdom which argues that, tyrannicide apart, the origins of modern terrorism lie in the nineteenth century.[33] The Assassins, it would seem, were the archetypal terrorist group. Theirs, moreover, was an international movement. They established missions in Syria, Afghanistan and India, besides their main centre in Persia. Killer squads from Syria struck in Egypt and once, somewhat surprisingly, in Persia. Later, when the Syrian mission was temporarily disorganised, a Persian team from Alamut killed the Turkish ruler in Damascus.

We are left to ponder why, in spite of their ideological dedication, disciplined propaganda organisation and impressive military capability, the Assassins failed. The da'is made many converts. Yet in the process they seem also to have alienated majority opinion; hence the lynching of the Ismaili envoy as he left the Sultan's palace in Isfahan and the readiness of non-Nizaris to indulge in massacres. The fida'is' success in curbing official action against the Assassins may also have produced side-effects unforeseen by and unwelcome to the Lords of Alamut. When ordinary people suspect that their leaders are evading their responsibilities and allowing a minority, quite literally, to get away with murder, resentment becomes acute. Conceivably the killings that were intended to facilitate

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33. See, for instance, Walter Laqueur (Ed) The Terrorism Reader (Philadelphia, 1978).

conversions by the da'is indirectly raised a psychological barrier between the converted and the orthodox.

These possibilities provide only part of the answer. To find the primary reason for Nizari failure we must consider the main thrust of their attack, propaganda. Against such an assault the soundest defence would have been strong, convincing counter-propaganda. Hasan-i Sabbah launched his rebellion in the face of a great Sunni revival, brought about by the threat from the soon defunct Fatimid Ismailism. This misfortune was compounded by the Seljuks' strong sense of duty to Islam, as the new protectors of the Caliph and masters of the Muslim world.[34] Unfortunately for Hasan the tide of revolution was already on the ebb when in 1081 he returned to Persia ready to begin his mission. Nevertheless, his combined use of politics, propaganda and terrorism for revolutionary ends posed problems for authority that were only eventually solved by outside intervention, and he left us, in Juvayni's words, a tradition in the world.

Discrediting the Assassins

History has played tricks with the Assassin's story, both in Islam and Christendom. One of the ways that men humiliated by Nizari terror took revenge, was to blacken the reputations of their tormentors. All the contemporary historians wrote from the orthodox Sunni viewpoint. There was no radical, investigative author writing 'from the other side'. The Assassins planted more than humiliation in the hearts of their enemies. They created a seething indignation, a sense of outraged decency. Hasan-i Sabbah's terror tactics had broken all the unwritten rules of warfare that tend to expose the lower orders and junior officers to the greatest risks and protect the privileged and senior. The fida'is reversed this graduation, exposing the frailty and impermanence, and often the cowardice, of the supposedly grand and elite. On top of these secular considerations the need remained to expurgate a heresy.

One worrying facet of the Nizari heresy was the Movement's hold over its members. The dedication of the da'is and the fanatical zeal

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34. Lewis, p 32.

of the fida'is, for whom death was of no consequence provided the mission was accomplished, posed unanswerable questions to the orthodox. Rather than admit the possibility that a heresy might inspire so strong a commitment, myths were invented to explain away the tenacity and the courage. The most enduring of these conceptions arose in Syria, where the Arabic word hashishi was attached to the Nizari Ismailis, in Lewis's opinion almost certainly as an expression of contempt for their wild beliefs and extravagant behaviour rather than a description of their practices. The meaning of the word is rather obvious, one who uses Indian Hemp or Cannabis. In no time the potential of this word to discredit and to explain led to the connection being reversed, and the story being applied to the entire Nizari movement. In the revised version the insurgents really did take drugs, and the drugs accounted for their behaviour. The term of contempt 'hashishi' became widely used as a name for the Nizari sect: after appearing in variant forms 'assassini' and 'assissini', it settled in the name we know today - the Assassins.[35]

Marco Polo travelled through Persia in 1273, only seventeen years after the surrender of Alamut to the Mongols. Already, the version of Nizari motivation 'sold' to him by his hosts relied heavily upon drug abuse. The Venetian recorded the story faithfully and in due course spread the word in Europe, where the acts of the Assassins had already aroused much interest. Like all good myths, this one is better than reality, hence its enduring appeal. Marco Polo wrote:

> The Old Man thought of an unheard-of wickedness, that he should make men bold murderers, who are commonly called assassins, by whose courage he might kill whoever he wished and be feared by all. He dwelled in a most noble valley shut in between two very high mountains where there was abundance and delight. There were set to dwell ladies and damsels the most beautiful in the world, all trained in making all the dalliance and allurements to men that can be imagined.
>
> Sometimes the Old Man, when he wished to kill any lord who made war or was his enemy, put some of these youths into that Paradise by fours and sixes and by tens or twelves and by twenties together. He had opium to drink given them by which they fell

35. In the same way, the urban guerrilla movements mentioned in the introduction to this chapter were referred to by Imperial Iranian authority, collectively and dismissively, as 'Islamic Marxists'.

> asleep as if half dead immediately, as soon as they had drunk it, and they slept quite three days and three nights. Then he had them taken in this sleep and put into that garden of his, into different rooms of palaces, and there made them awake, and they found themselves there.
>
> And when the youths were waked up they believe that they are most truly in Paradise. And the ladies and damsels stayed with them all day playing and singing and causing great enjoyment, and they did with them as they pleased, so that these youths had all that they wished. And after four or five days when the Old Man wishes any of his assassins to send to any place and to have any man killed, then he has the drink opium given again, and when they are asleep he has them taken into his palace which was outside the garden. When the youths are awakened the Old Man asks them whence they come, and those say that they come from Paradise. And the Old Man answered them, son, this is by the commandment of our prophet Mohomet, that whoever defends his servant he will grant to him Paradise; and if thou art obedient to me thou shalt have this favour. Through this means he so inspirited all his people to die that they might go to Paradise that he whom the Old Man ordered to go to die for his name reckoned himself happy, with sure hope of deserving to go to Paradise, so that as many lords or others who were enemies of the Old Man were killed with these followers and assassins, because none feared death if only he could do the commandment, and they exposed themselves like madmen to every manifest danger, wishing to die together with the King's enemy and despising the present life. And for this reason he was feared in all those countries as a tyrant. 36

Other stories told of the 'Old Man of the Mountains' ordering his bodyguards to march to their deaths off the ramparts of Alamut, as an after-dinner entertainment for his guests.

Throughout their campaign the Assassins doubtless saw themselves as soldiers in a sacred cause, battling the forces of evil, while the Seljuks and Sunnis regarded the fida'is as fanatical criminals of a most treacherous, ruthless and dangerous kind. This dichotomy, common to all insurrections, has no easy resolution; more often than not the historians have had the last word, approving of the rebels as heroes when they have triumphed and dismissing them as ruffians when they failed.[37] Europeans, free of bias concerning the Islamic ideological

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36. Marco Polo, The Description of the World, edited by A C Moule and Paul Pelliot, (London, 1938) Vol I, pp 129-132.

37. Ellul writes: 'Proof through history is nowadays regarded as the proof. He in whose favour history decides, was right. But what is it "to be right" when one speaks of history? It is to win, to survive, ie, to be the strongest. This would mean that the strongest and the most efficient, nowadays, is the possessor of the truth.' (Ellul (i), p 234).

dispute, were impressed by the bravery and fanatical devotion of the Assassins, and initially connected that name to unswerving loyalty and service. Only later did the association shift from the spirit to the act, and the word became synonymous with political murder. It is perhaps ironic that our modern usage of the word assassin has been stretched to include the injury suffered by the Nizari Ismailis as well as the fate they imposed upon their victims. When we speak of 'character-assassination' we twist the knife in the wound.

Discussion

Propaganda was evidently an important part of the Assassins' revolutionary strategy, possibly the most important. It was used to spread the New Preaching amongst 'neutrals' and sometimes among 'enemies', the Seljuk forces. Against the converted, 'friends', it provided discipline, commitment and passionate devotion. Towards 'enemies', that is to say the government and its agents, it was assisted by the instrument of terror and paralysed effective responses. Propaganda was thus both 'strategic', to bring victory through ideological conversion, and 'tactical', to keep the campaign alive and weaken resistance. As this was a religious movement, the message style would probably have been mainly emotional, but quasi-rational argument was possibly drawn in when economic and social grievances were exploited. Most forms of propaganda were directed inwards at domestic audiences, enjoying the strength inherent in this form of communication. The difficulties of addressing messages to foreign target audiences in India, Syria and other outside areas were overcome by enlisting locals into the movement, who became the propagandists for their own territories. Everywhere, organisation was a vital ingredient. Adherents were made to commit themselves beyond the point of no return, and then became totally subject to Nizari discipline and teaching, needing more propaganda to sustain their actions and self-respect. The recruitment of new members by cells of oath-bound converts is a method sometimes called horizontal propaganda, recognised today in two forms, that of Chinese propaganda and of group dynamics in human relations. Ellul sees both as integration

propaganda,[38] in our case moulding recruits into obedient and willing disciples.

Within the movement,propaganda themes created a sense of absolute righteousness (Saints of God), an aura of mysticism and discipline, and an intense hatred of Seljuk and Sunni domination (Devils). Killing became an act of piety (Bliss) and martyrdom in the service of the Da'wa, a certain passport to eternity. With these convictions, courage was readily available and acts of courage created the fida'is' reputation for irresistibility. Resistance was made to seem hopeless, and co-operation, desirable. The ultimate triumph of the revolution was said to be inevitable. Other themes included terror, the mocking of security force endeavours, the legitimacy of the 'alternative regime' and the credibility of its power, and the spreading of a 'climate of collapse'.

The Seljuk response to the threat posed by Assassin tactical propaganda and the terror that gave it its strength was feeble. Officials lacked the individual and collective strength of will to stand up to violence and the threat of violence, and because of their weakness the problem grew worse. Short-term convenience, it would seem, prevailed over long-term solutions. If the Assassins were our archetypal terrorists, the Seljuk authorities may have set a pattern too often repeated by governments confronted by such a threat. Against the strategic propaganda, the religious subversion, the Sunni response was evidently good. By mounting a revival of faith amongst the people, the orthodox beliefs outlived the Nizari Ismaili challenge. The power of propaganda to blacken reputations and distort history was amply demonstrated by subsequent events.

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38. Ellul (i), pp 80-81.

CHAPTER III

PROPAGANDA OF THE DEED

THE 1916 EASTER RISING

I have turned my Face
To this road before me,
To the deed that I see
And the death I shall die. [1]

These lines, written in 1912 by a Dublin barrister-turned-schoolmaster, foretold with remarkable accuracy the events of Easter 1916. A handful of violent Irish nationalists led by Patrick Pearse, the schoolmaster-poet, were to commit a deed and die deaths which together would create a myth of massive and enduring strength. It is probably true to say that Ireland would never be the same after Pearse had fulfilled his own prophecy.

This chapter examines Irish revolutionary propaganda in the period leading up to Easter 1916, the 'propaganda of the deed' that occurred in Holy Week, the exploitation of the deed for political purposes, and the reactions of the United Kingdom authorities.

Spring 1916

In the early Spring of 1916 Ireland enjoyed greater prosperity, better government and happier relations with the English than anyone could remember. Irishmen could vote, join the Civil Service, practise religion as they pleased and enjoy constitutional rights equal to any in the United Kingdom. The political struggle for Home Rule had triumphed in the House of Commons and there was reason to hope that the measure would be implemented as soon as the war against Germany was over. This had been achieved by John Redmond's Irish Parliamentary (Home Rule) Party, and majority opinion was firmly behind this leader.

Ireland's youth had responded eagerly to the massive recruiting drive launched by Britain's armed services in 1914. The propaganda

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1. Patrick Pearse 'Renunciation,' Verse 5, quoted Ruth Dudley Edwards Patrick Pearse, The Triumph of Failure, (London, 1977) p 156.

themes of the rape of Belgium, and of manhood held cheap by those who did not volunteer to resist Germany, caught the imaginations of Irish men and women as actively as they captivated English, Scots and Welsh. By late 1915 there were a quarter-million Irishmen fighting with the armies in France and Gallipoli. The war had also brought prosperity to Ireland. England's need of food and wool, as well as labour, meant income and jobs. The British Administration, based at Dublin Castle, was anything but oppressive. The Chief Secretary for Ireland was Augustine Birrell. As a member of Prime Minister Asquith's Cabinet, Birrell divided his time between London and Dublin, leaving the day to day work in the relaxed hands of the Under Secretary, Sir Matthew Nathan. Both men were genuinely fond of Ireland and dedicated to the task of good administration, though realistic in their assessment of grass-root opinion. 'Ireland', wrote Birrell in a memo to Nathan in 1915, 'is, I am sure, in a rotten state - ripe for a row, without leadership'.[2] Besides these administrators there was a Lord Lieutenant, the King's representative without executive power, a post at that time filled by Lord Wimborne.

The Administration was seriously concerned about two things, the anti-recruiting campaign conducted by a political party called Sinn Féin and the fear that extremists in Ireland might plot mischief in conjunction with Germany. Evidence of the first danger was to be seen on most street corners in the form of literature, posters or speech-makers: evidence of the second threat cropped up in intelligence reports from Germany, America and various sources inside Ireland. In dealing with these problems Birrell and Nathan had to tread warily. They knew that Ireland's surface tranquility and loyal response to the call to arms were one side only of the coin. On the reverse was an Ireland that could become virtually ungovernable overnight.

Revolutionary Sources

Popular myth instructs us that for eight hundred years Ireland struggled valiantly against the Anglo-Normans and later the English,

2. Quoted by Leon O'Broin (i) Dublin Castle and the 1916 Rising, (Dublin, 1966) p 51.

and that the events of the twentieth century were a triumphant culmination of a long drawn-out war. There is truth in such a view, but also an over-simplification that distorts the truth. As often as not there were more Irishmen fighting with the English than against them and even in some of the wars which had the greatest appearance of national struggles, there were a great many Irishmen on the English side. In the English army which opposed Hugh O'Neill in 1598 two-thirds were Irishmen. At Kinsale in 1601, a great part of Mountjoy's horsemen were Irish, and in 1798 the rebellion was mainly defeated by the newly-formed Irish militia regiments. No less than 210 of the 220 crew of the British warship that stopped Wolfe Tone's ship on its way to America in 1795 turned out to be Irish.[3] These facts do not deny or excuse the oppression of Ireland by the English, but they do suggest that the historical background to the events of 1916 was less straightforward than has sometimes been suggested:

> In the right corner virgin Eire, virtuous and oppressed, in the left the bloody Saxon, the unique source of every Irish ill and malaise; round eight, the duration of each round a hundred years ... [4]

Wolfe Tone, through his Society of United Irishmen, had sown the seeds of Irish separatism, based more on his admiration of the French revolution than on any deep affinity with native Irish aspirations. He taught hatred of England as the mainstay of his political philosophy, a hatred originating not so much from England's treatment of Ireland as from a British prime minister's blunt refusal to back his plan to 'devastate the territories of Spanish America and plunder the Churches'.[5] Separatism, and the hatred, were kept alive during the nineteenth century by the Fenians, a movement that drew strength from Irish emigrants in North America as well as from violent nationalists at home. The Great Famine of 1846-47 had forced mass exodus and thereafter the Irish revolutionary movement possessed a

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3. Francis Shaw 'The Canon of Irish History - A Challenge', in Studies, An Irish Quarterly Review, (Dublin & London, 1972), p 143.
4. Shaw, p 117.
5. Shaw, p 127.

trans-Atlantic dimension. The Fenian rising of 1867 was a dismal failure but nevertheless the organisation behind it remained intact. In 1873 it adopted the title Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), and remained a secret, oath-bound organisation dedicated to a violent overthrown of British rule, closely linked to conspirators in the United States. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century England gave further cause for hatred by the Act of Union, unfair and oppressive laws on franchise and land tenancy, indifference to the consequences of famine, and general maladministration.

In America, newspapers such as Irish People, Phoenix and Irish American stirred the pot of revolution. There were voices favouring non-violence, but generally the extremist view prevailed. The American wing of the IRB, now called Clan na Gael, almost certainly sponsored a terrorist group in Ireland known as the 'Invincibles' who were later to murder the Chief Secretary for Ireland and his Under-Secretary, just as it encouraged the 'Skirmishing Fund', the Fenians dedicated to killing landlords and their agents.[6] Peasant resentment at their miserable treatment by landlords had created a real revolutionary situation. Fortunately for both countries, the general election of 1868 brought the Liberal Party under Gladstone to power. 'My mission', the new prime minister told Queen Victoria when he went to accept office, 'is to pacify Ireland'.[7] By the time he finally resigned office in 1894 he had gone far towards accomplishing his mission. Bills reforming religious status, land and franchise had been passed. Two Home Rule Bills had been introduced, the first being defeated in the Commons, the second in the Lords. The successes disarmed the threat of peasant revolt: the failures encouraged the growth of middle-class militancy. The taste of freedom acted as a stiumulant rather than as a palliative to the hunger pangs of Irish nationalists. During Gladstone's premiership the Irish Parliamentary (Home Rule) Party, under its leader Parnell, played an effective role in the constitutional struggle for Irish freedom. Unfortunately the disgrace of Parnell followed by his death in 1891 led

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6. Edward Hyams Terrorists and Terrorism, (London, 1975) p 89.
7. Norman Atkinson Irish History 1848-1950, (Dublin, 1972), p 16.

to a split in his party. This, and the return to power in Westminster of a Conservative Government opposed to Home Rule, made many Irish doubt the effectiveness of the constitutional process. It was in this political climate that Arthur Griffith in 1905 founded a new party named Sinn Féin ('Ourselves Alone').

Sinn Féin at its inception provided a rallying point for middle-of-the-road Irish nationalists, those who had grown impatient with Westminster and who rejected the assumption that Ireland must wait, if necessary forever, until their Lordships in the Upper House felt inclined to permit a modicum of independence, but who nevertheless avoided the extreme policies of the IRB. As its name implied, Sinn Féin was a go-it-alone movement that argued that Ireland should assert her existence in the world and establish in Dublin a legislature endowed with the moral authority of the Irish nation. This was a revolutionary doctrine, in the political sense, especially in its leanings towards the setting up of parallel hierarchies, but the party did not favour revolutionary violence.

At the same time that Sinn Féin was gathering strength the Home Rule Party was recovering its cohesion under its new leader, John Redmond. The return to power at Westminster of a Liberal Government in 1906 restored hope in the constitutional road to self-government, and thus checked the threatened decline of Redmond's influence. In 1911 the Lords' power of veto was replaced by the lesser power to suspend legislation for two years. In 1912 the new Prime Minister, Asquith, introduced a Home Rule Bill. This was passed by the Commons and rejected by the Lords, so that after two years, in 1914, it could become law. 'The Irish problem' seemed on the verge of a solution.

Unionism had long been a political force in Ireland, directed towards the maintenance of Westminster rule. Its strength lay with the Anglo-Irish in Dublin and the Protestants of the Northern counties. The former possessed influence disproportionate to their numbers, through newspapers and political position, but in real terms their power to control events was small. The latter had achieved political and economic dominance in parts of Ulster, an advantage that seemed threatened with reversal if they were to be absorbed into a self-governing Ireland. The Orange Order, formed at the end of the

eighteenth century, provided an organisational framework of propaganda and discipline that cut across class divisions, emphasising instead the religious divide between Protestants and Catholics. The Unionist Party used the Orange Order as an instrument of integration propaganda, to create a distinct and separate Protestant Irish identity, and as the purveyor of agitation propaganda, whenever it was necessary to excite members to revolutionary action.[8]

Such activity was deemed appropriate by the Ulster Unionist leader Sir Edward Carson to deter and if necessary repel Home Rule legislation. In April 1912, just as the Home Rule Bill was about to go before the Commons, Carson reviewed 80,000 members of his illegal 'Ulster Volunteers', a para-military force raised to resist majority Irish rule. This revolutionary act was seen by many in England as a demonstration of loyalty. Asquith, who from the frequent use of the phrase was later to acquire the nickname 'Wait and see', waited. Some Army officers indicated their unwillingness to move against 'loyalists'. The Conservative Party decided to turn Irish Protestant aspirations to imperial and party political advantage, hoping that opposition in the North would make the whole idea of Home Rule impossible. A myth has arisen that these machinations created rather than assisted Ulster separatism, an idea that ignores hundreds of years of history. The myth has survived because it provides sincere Irish nationalists with a comfortable explanation for the otherwise inexplicable and emotionally unacceptable fact that one million Irish men and women refused to share the Catholic Irish dream of a single independent Irish nation. What the machinations did do was to undermine respect for lawful authority in Ireland and to reinforce instead deference to the power that grows from the barrel of a gun.

The formation of the Ulster Volunteers led, not surprisingly, to the creation in the South of a similar force to protect majority interests. The 'Irish Volunteers' were founded in 1913 under the leadership of Professor Eoin MacNeill, a moderate. Redmond was worried that this organisation might fall under extremist control

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8. The terms 'integration' and 'agitation' propaganda are used here in Professor Ellul's meanings. See p18.

and he arranged with MacNeill for twenty-five representatives of his Parliamentary Party to join the existing twenty-five members of the Volunteers' committee. He had not,however,given sufficient credit to the IRB's ability and determination to exploit this new force for their violent revolutionary ends. Another 'private army' was formed in October 1913 when the militant socialist leader James Connolly put his followers into the uniform of the 'Irish Citizens Army', a tiny Dublin-based force.[9]

On the outbreak of war in 1914 the British Government suspended the Home Rule Bill for the duration, receiving the support of Unionists in the North and Redmond's party in the South. In September Redmond decided to throw the strength of the Irish Volunteers behind Britain's war effort and ninety-five per cent of the members responded, becoming the National Volunteers. The rump organisation, the Irish Volunteers, was left with only 11,000 members, still under MacNeill's control. Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers and the Citizens Army overtly opposed Irish participation in the European war, while the IRB's Supreme Council secretly vowed that 'there must be an Irish insurrection before the end of England's war'.[10] These were the currents of unrest and the sources of potential violence that threatened to make Ireland ungovernable and thus inhibited the Administration in Dublin Castle in the early months of 1916.

Patrick Pearse and the Irish Republican Brotherhood

Patrick Pearse belongs to a group of unconventional individuals whose force of character and whose accomplishments have left controversial but indelible marks on history. In Pearse's time, T E Lawrence, and in the next generation, Orde Wingate, may be seen as belonging to this same category. Some admired and others disliked them, but few were able to ignore them.

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9. See F X Martin (editor) The Irish Volunteers; recollections and documents, (Dublin, 1963) and Sean O'Casey The Story of the Irish Citizen Army, (Dublin, 1919).

10. quoted Charles Duff Six Days to Shake an Empire, (London, 1966) p 62.

Pearse had a complex personality; in his writings, warm hearted and sentimental, but in his dealings with other men, often cold, withdrawn and unapproachable. In love with a romantic myth of ancient Ireland, he threw himself recklessly into whatever great patriotic challenge for the time-being beckoned him. Chief among these in his earlier life was his school, St Enda's, where he taught his 'New Testament of Irish Nationality'. Pearse was a keen supporter of the Gaelic League, a cultural movement begun in 1893 to preserve the Irish language and encourage its use in modern literature. One of the League's objectives was to unify Irish people of different social, political and religious backgrounds. Culture can make strong integration propaganda and it may be regretted that so little progress was actually made in reconciling differences between the two main religious communities, the native Catholic Irish and the Protestant children of the Ulster Plantation. Such bridge-building was made impossible by nationalist extremists who used the League as a platform for agitation propaganda against England, effectively alienating the Northern loyalists. So far as these activists were concerned, independence must come before all else, and the Protestants could lump it.

Pearse was one such activist. Although he was not admitted to the IRB until late in 1913, his work as a propagandist for the cause of revolution and separatism began many years earlier. Violence requires justification, a sense of grievance and an enemy to hate. It was only natural that Pearse, who believed that 'God spoke to Ireland through Tone'[11], should write that 'Irish hate of the English is a holy passion'.[12] Other themes expressed in his superb English included the glorification of war, the need for blood sacrifice in the nationalist cause, and the elevation of patriotism to a form of holiness.[13] At the time these propaganda efforts lacked

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11. Patrick Pearse Collected Works of Padraic H Pearse, (Dublin, 1917) Vol II, p 293.
12. Pearse, Vol III p 126.
13. Shaw, pp 122-126.

credibility, there being no conflict, no oppression, no facts to bring the themes to life. Later, his collected works would acquire immense power and his rejuvenated myths would outshine truth.

In Ireland in 1914 the Irish Republican Brotherhood had some 1660 members, many of them intellectuals.[14] The poet William Butler Yeats and the playwright Sean O'Casey both belonged at various times. It was a condition of membership to subscribe to the idea of armed revolt. Doubtless many brothers took comfort from the Article of their Constitution which stated that the 'IRB shall await the decision of the Irish nation, as expressed by a majority of the Irish people, as to the fit hour of inaugurating a war against England'.[15] In the main the IRB was a ginger group, keeping alive the separatist, physical force tradition, using influence to obtain help and support, and making propaganda. Only a minority were real revolutionaries of the sort who go out and start revolutions. Those that were of this stamp cared nothing for the Articles of the Constitution.

When in 1914 the Supreme Council of the IRB decided that an insurrection should be launched during the course of England's war, there were dissenting voices. So the true revolutionaries on the Council voted for the creation of a 'Military Committee' to turn the resolution into reality. When this motion was passed, the militants ensured that Committee men would all be extremists, and thereafter this group virtually superseded the Supreme Council. Working in secrecy, they decided what was good for the IRB, and through the Brotherhood, for the Volunteers, and through the uniformed force, for Ireland.[16] The new Committee was composed of the relative newcomer, Patrick Pearse, the physically delicate 'military tactician', Joseph Plunkett, the old Fenian veteran of dynamite raids and English prisons, Tom Clarke, Eamonn Ceannt and Sean MacDiarmada. Late in 1915 these men decided that a fit hour for inaugurating a war against England would be Easter 1916. They ordered reliable IRB

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14. Leon O'Broin (ii) Revolutionary Underground, The Story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, (Dublin, 1976), p 155.

15. Quoted F X Martin 'Eoin MacNeill on the 1916 rising' in Irish Historical Studies, March 1961, p 239.

16. O'Broin (ii), p 156.

members in all areas to infiltrate the command structure of the Irish Volunteers, and they themselves took key positions near the top. James Connolly, the leader of the Citizen Army, was co-opted to the Committee in January 1916 and Thomas MacDonagh early in April. Thus the body eventually numbered seven. These men were to be the seven signatories to the Easter Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

Plans for Rebellion

The Military Committee planned to involve the Irish Volunteers, complete, and the Citizen Army. The latter's co-operation was not in doubt once Connolly had been won over. The full-scale involvement of the Volunteers was, however, a formidable problem, considering that neither its leader, MacNeill, nor the mass of its rank and file favoured revolutionary violence. The IRB men reckoned that their agents at battalion and company level would follow orders, and that their subordinates would obey their local leaders. Once in a fight, the Irish would always fight on. The principal problem, therefore, was how to plan the rising, promulgate orders and command the operations through the governing body of the Irish Volunteers, when half of that body's members were neither IRB men nor necessarily sympathetic to rebel causes. The solution of this problem rested upon Pearse's appointment as Director of Organisation on the Volunteer HQ staff, in which capacity he could order exercises and manoeuvres by units throughout the country, and Plunkett's appointment as Director of Operations. The outline Easter Rising orders could be published under the guise of an exercise, without arousing suspicion. Parallel orders confined to the secret IRB network were issued orally, converting the mobilization exercise into a full-scale rebellion.

The revolutionary plans of the IRB had, from the outset, two quite separate and in some respects contradictory purposes; on the one hand, to win a military victory that would overthrow British rule by force and on the other, to redeem Ireland's soul by violence, however that endeavour might end. The first ambition has been seen thus:

> In the War then raging in Europe Germany appeared to be doing remarkably well and many of the leaders believed that the War would end very soon. It was believed that if a military insurrection took place before the end of the War, Ireland could claim a seat at the Peace Conference, as a belligerent.[17]

From this hope a plan emerged. Sir Roger Casement was a distinguished British civil servant torn between his loyalties to the Crown and to Ireland. At the outbreak of the war the second loyalty won and he offered the Germans a rebellion in Ireland in return for a promise of assistance. This help was arranged initially by Clan na Gael, through the German Ambassador in Washington, and was central in the IRB's planning. Two German submarines would take part: one would escort two supply ships to a rendezvous off the coast near Tralee; the other would wait till the Rising had begun and then make its appearance in Dublin Port. The supply ships would unload the 'Irish Brigade', Irishmen recruited by Casement from German prisoner-of-war camps, German officers to lead the Volunteers, and a massive arms consignment. Then, on the evening of Easter Sunday, the action could start. Operations would involve units in Dublin, Limerick, Cork and all the south and west. Key points would everywhere be seized, an Irish Republic declared, the police and military taken by surprise and whenever possible disarmed. If necessary the rebels would take to the hills and fight a guerrilla war. Help from Irish-Americans, whose adopted country was still neutral in the European War, might be expected. Connolly remarked that 'the chances against us are a thousand to one',[18] words that have often been interpreted as an expression of hopelessness. Another interpretation would draw the opposite conclusion, that the leader of the Citizen Army viewed the coming struggle with realistic anxiety, but saw a slim but positive prospect of success. In one respect the planners apparently anticipated the revolutionary theories of such latter-day exponents and writers as Che Guevara and Regis Debray, who have recommended abrupt plunges into revolution, with the mobilisation of mass support occurring during the ensuing conflict.[19]

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17. Eogham O'Neill 'The Battle of Dublin 1916' in An Cosantoir, (Dublin) p 215.

18. Duff, p 48.

19. See Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara Guerrilla Warfare, (London, 1962) and Debray, op cit.

The second purpose of the Rising was understood most clearly, and perhaps exclusively, by Patrick Pearse. In 1911 W P Ryan described him as 'a scholar with a child-spirit, a mystical temperament, and a Celtic nature, in the heroic and constructive sense'.[20] Perhaps these characteristics equipped him to appreciate instinctively that the mobilisation of the masses was an achievement worth fighting for on its own, even in the full realisation that defeat in the short-term was inevitable. He seems to have anticipated another modern revolutionary activist and author, Carlos Marighella, who taught that, in response to urban guerrilla warfare, the 'government has no alternative except to intensify repression. The police networks, house searches, arrests of innocent people and of suspects, closing off streets, make life in the city unbearable ... The people refuse to collaborate with the authorities, and the general sentiment is that the government is unjust, incapable of solving problems, and resorts purely and simply to the physical liquidation of its opponents'.[21] Sometime before the Rising, Pearse said to his mother: 'The day is coming when I shall be shot, swept away, and my colleagues shot like me'.[22] This is a view different from Connolly's, the view of a man seeing the uprising in exemplary rather than practical terms. The verse that heads this chapter seems to suggest that he appreciated the revolutionary potential of blood sacrifice, and the inevitability of such a sacrifice if the deed was correctly performed.

We might conclude that the Easter Rising, in the form originally planned, was primarily intended to break Britain's hold over Ireland by force, with a secondary aim of uniting public opinion in favour of revolutionary violence. A switch of priorities came only at the last moment, as a result of a chapter of accidents that made the first plan unworkable.

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20. W P Ryan The Pope's Green Island, (London, 1912) p 291. (It is unclear whether or not Ryan was aware, when calling Pearse 'Celtic' that he had an English father.)

21. Marighella op cit, pp 39-40.

22. Quoted Duff, p 48.

Order and Counter-order

On Easter Sunday, 23 April 1916, two meetings took place in Dublin to review plans in the light of unforeseen circumstances. One was held in Vice-regal Lodge, the residence of Lord Wimborne, the Lord Lieutenant; the other in Liberty Hall, the Labour headquarters, well defended by men of the Citizen Army. The unforeseen circumstances necessitating both meetings arose from an attempt on Easter Friday to land arms and ammunition near Tralee. The plot had been foiled by the Royal Navy. The solitary supply ship had been scuttled by its crew, and a group of conspirators put ashore from a German submarine had been captured by the police. Among these men was Sir Roger Casement.

The Chief Secretary was in London so it was his Assistant, Nathan, who led the group of officials summoned by Wimborne. The Lord Lieutenant was convinced that the attempted landing of arms was in preparation for some uprising, and that notwithstanding the loss of the supplies, the insurrection would go ahead. He tried to persuade his officials to take pre-emptive action by arresting known activists forthwith. Nathan knew that such action would involve severe risk of bringing about the rebellion they hoped to avoid. Having shrunk in 1912 from moving against the Ulster Volunteers, the British Government had felt unable one year later to act one-sidely against the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army. The country was consequently being governed on a basis of trust, or hope, that these militias would remain passive. Nothing could now be done that might provoke these 'private armies' without full-scale military backing, and this would take time to arrange. Nathan pointed to these difficulties and promised to raise the matter with the Chief Secretary upon the latter's return to Dublin. Unaccountably, nothing was done in the meantime to put the police and military on the alert.[23]

The group meeting in Liberty Hall was the Military Committee, IRB. Their troubles had begun on the previous Wednesday when MacNeill, Chief-of-Staff of the Volunteers, had discovered that a rising was planned for the coming weekend. He had immediately set about trying to

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23. For a full and detailed account, see O'Broin (i).

learn more, and to forestall action. Pearse and his IRB colleagues had then decided that the best course open to them was to explain everything to MacNeill and try to win his support. If persuasion failed, he would have to be kidnapped until the operation was under way, a fate that overtook one moderate who persisted in his objections, Bulmer Hobson. The Committee therefore explained to MacNeill their plans for rebellion, and the expected arrival of weapons. German assistance was by this stage considerably less than discussed earlier. No submarine was to be sent to Dublin and only one supply ship was headed for Tralee. This would carry the consignment of arms and ammunition, while its escort submarine would bring Casement and other key men. But there would be no Irish Brigade, and no German officers. MacNeill, impressed by the detail of the planning and, particularly, by the promise of German arms, agreed to hand over control to Pearse. 'Entryism' had enabled the IRB to take complete charge of the Irish Volunteers without the rank and file being any the wiser.[24]

MacNeill's co-operation was short-lived. When on Saturday evening he learnt that the weapons had been lost, thus leaving the volunteers in the south and west virtually unarmed, he decided that the rebellion could not possibly succeed and must be stopped. 'Volunteers completely deceived', he wrote, pointedly, in his urgent despatch. 'All orders for tomorrow Sunday are entirely cancelled.'[25] To be doubly certain, he placed a notice in the next day's Sunday Independent forbidding volunteers to parade. On the face of it MacNeill had thwarted the IRB plans, and this was the muddled situation that confronted the Military Council on Sunday morning. Now was the moment when these leaders demonstrated their fanaticism, their disregard for other people's opinions or other men's lives, as well as their own high personal courage. They decided to go ahead, although on a limited scale. The country battalions would be overtly ordered to obey MacNeill's despatch and

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24. For a full and detailed account, see O'Broin (ii).

25. The handwritten note is reproduced as a photograph in Redmond Fitzgerald Cry Blood, Cry Erin, (London, 1966) p 69.

stand down; the Dublin battalions and the Citizen Army would be covertly instructed to postpone action 24 hours, and then to operate as planned.[26]

In modern military parlance, H Hour would now be at noon on Easter Monday, 24 April. In the terminology of revolution, the Rising had lost its military purpose and was instead to be 'Propaganda of the Deed'.[27] It is unclear whether or not the Council members appreciated this switch of aim that the changes in the plan had inevitably brought about, a common enough reversal of planning thrust in a fluid situation. However Connolly was left in no doubt as to the practical implications. Next morning he remarked quietly to William O'Brien: 'We are going out to be slaughtered.'[28] The one chance in a thousand had gone. Connolly went on: 'There is nothing that you can do now, but you may be of great service later on.'[29] O'Brien was proprietor of the Cork Free Press weekly, and Connolly's words implied that he, too, was beginning to see public opinion as the decisive weapon.

The original plan drawn up by the Committee's tactician, Joseph Plunkett, had required volunteers to hold a solid defensive line across Dublin, from which the rebels could withdraw inland if and when British attacks become overpowering. But because the sequence of order and counter-order had led inevitably to a degree of disorder, the number of volunteers actually available on Easter Monday was down to some 1250 men, not enough for linear defence. So the smaller force was ordered to occupy a number of buildings, important symbolically or tactically or both, and to defend them as long as possible. This decision passed the initiative to the Security Forces, who would be forced to instigate violence and destruction in the middle of a crowded city, and it endowed the rebels with the inherent strength of the defence, a strength that is multiplied tenfold in a

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26. At 8 pm on the Sunday evening couriers were again sent to the country battalions this time bearing the message 'We start operations at noon, Monday - Carry out your instructions'. Only in rare cases did this vague instruction succeed in bringing the Volunteers outside Dublin into the fight.

27. See p 22.

28. William O'Brien James Connolly and Easter Week 1916, (Dublin, undated, published in 1949) p 23.

29. O'Brien, p 23.

built-up area. Nevertheless it was clear from the start that this deployment could never bring victory. All it could do was to postpone defeat, while the world looked on.

The Deed That I See

The authorities were taken completely by surprise. At noon on Easter Monday most rebel objectives were seized without opposition and it took the police and military some hours to realise what was afoot. The Four Courts, The South Dublin Union, Boland's Mills and Jacob's Factory were taken according to plan. Harcourt Street Station, Westland Row Station and the North Dublin Union were also occupied. Barricades were thrown up across the streets. The Citizen Army took possession of St Stephen's Green. Dublin Castle, centre of British government in Ireland, was not taken, the small rebel force assembled for the attempt being unaware that it was, in fact, virtually unguarded. Pearse made his headquarters in the General Post Office. There he declared the Provisional Irish Republic, with himself as President. He also promoted himself Commanding in Chief of the Republic's Army and appointed Connolly Commandant General of the Dublin Division. The general public viewed the whole spectacle with astonished scorn, and sometimes, disgust. An eye witness reported how one man tried to recover his barrow which the rebels had commandeered as a barricade:

> "Go and put back that lorry or you are a dead man. Go before I count four. One, two, three, four ... "
>
> A rifle spat at him, and in two undulating movements the man sank on himself and sagged to the ground ...
>
> At that moment the Volunteers were hated. The men by whom I was and who were lifting the body, roared into the railings:
>
> "We'll be coming back for you, damn you." [30]

Further excesses and mistakes marred the initial operations. Dublin constables J Brien and M Lahiff were murdered in cold blood. Neither was armed. During an abortive raid on the Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park Garry Holohan shot dead the young son of the British Commander. Five

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30. James Stephens The Insurrection in Dublin, (Dublin and London, 1916) pp 24-25.

members of the Veterans Corps were killed by rebel gunfire before these old men were correctly identified.

The British troops stationed in Dublin numbered about 1200, and at the start of the Rising most were off duty, many attending the Fairyhouse Races. The senior officer on duty in the city was an adjutant. The Dublin Metropolitan Police were unarmed, and the routine guard on the General Post Office had rifles but no ammunition. When he discovered what was happening, Colonel Cowan, who was acting in command during General Friend's leave in England, telephoned Belfast, the Curragh, Templemore and Athlone and asked for reinforcements. Some time afterwards, the C-in-C Home Forces ordered two brigades from England.

Cowan's plan was straightforward and sound: make contact to establish the whereabouts and strength of rebel posts; contain and if possible isolate these positions; with the help of artillery, and using reinforcements from England, reduce all defended areas and force their surrender. By Tuesday he had succeeded in establishing a line of posts from Trinity College to Dublin Castle and on to Kingsbridge Station, thus dividing the rebel forces in two. On the next day he drew a cordon round the centre of the town. His troops were for the most part raw English recruits and none had received training in street fighting or in conducting 'counter-insurgency warfare'. Many of the rebels were in plain clothes and their supporting services of youths and women volunteers took advantage of their age or sex to pass through fighting lines. These methods infuriated the British troops and led to a number of vengeful acts that discredited their otherwise good record. There was one act of madness that few people knew anything about at the time. Captain Bowen-Colthurst first slaughtered a loitering passer-by and then ordered three journalists shot. One of his victims was a much respected pacifist called Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. There was also a great deal of looting by the civilian population and, to counter this, martial law was pronounced on Thursday 27th. Most of Dublin's population remained opposed to the rebels. Even if they read IRB propaganda, at this stage most people disregarded it completely.

The main component of rebel propaganda was the Rising itself. This was intended, at least by Pearse, to begin the mobilisation of the Irish masses for the independence struggle. Inside this action

propaganda aimed to crystallise issues, create legitimacy for the rebellion, and establish reference points for the future. The central document was the Proclamation of the Provisional Government.[31] This is a fine piece, dignified, stirring, and imaginative. It reaches back into history and points to a Republican future. By talking of an 'Irish Republic' which did not then exist, the Proclamation created an aura of legitimacy for the rebel acts. This had two purposes. The first was made clear in the text: 'The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwomen'.[32] The second purpose was to clear the consciences of volunteers over killing those who stood in their way, and over indirectly bringing about many more deaths and injuries.

Bulletins were issued by Pearse and Connolly during the fighting, seeking the support of the Dublin public and reiterating the purpose of the violence. Connolly concentrated on raising morale among the rebels. In his final bulletin issued on 28 April Pearse paid tribute to his followers and stated that 'I am satisfied that we have saved Ireland's honour'.[33] The only formal propaganda issued was one copy of Irish War News, printed on the Liberty Hall Press, and published on the Tuesday.[34] Most of the copy had apparently been prepared prior to the Rising and the only mention of the event itself appears in a 'Stop Press' on the back page. With a tiny circulation, this was weak propaganda. According to an early booklet about the rebellion, 'the insurgents seized the School of Wireless Telegraphy, at the corner of Lower Abbey Street, and spread the news over the earth'.[35] In fact these efforts had little effect but they were not needed. 'Propaganda of the deed' always relies on intermediaries for its dissemination. The British authorities did not try to suppress news of the Rising and the IRB had their message carried to a huge public through the newspapers

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31. Reproduced in The Sinn Féin Revolt Illustrated, (Revolt) (Dublin, 1916) p 27.
32. Revolt 3rd paragraph of Proclamation.
33. Revolt, p 27.
34. Revolt. A facsimile of the paper was issued with the Illustrated.
35. Revolt, p 40.

of the world, many of which published the text of the Proclamation. Impressed by the scale of the fighting, the British Government was meanwhile selecting someone to cope with the situation.

The suppression of insurrection is first and foremost an act of government administration. The security forces have important roles to play, but only within a political framework. To see it otherwise, to concede through the nature of government response that a state of war exists, is to go far towards accepting the claims of legitimacy invariably advanced by revolutionaries and set out in this case in the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. As the Easter Rising crumbled before the Army's attacks, a need arose for firm but subtle political management, under Cabinet direction. Mr Asquith, it would seem, failed to appreciate this need. Instead he virtually handed over political control to a soldier. Through Lord Kitchener, the Minister for War, the Government made known their wish that a general should be sent to assume overall control. The C-in-C Home Forces selected Sir John Maxwell. The directive issued to this officer might have done for Oliver Cromwell, calling for 'the prompt suppression of the insurrection in Ireland'. Perhaps Asquith thought that he could afford to 'wait and see', before committing himself politically.

Lieutenant-General Sir John Maxwell was a conscientious and capable officer, but hardly what might be termed 'politically aware'. At the early age of 37 he had commanded a brigade in the campaign in the Sudan against the Mahdi. Later he had been the Duke of Connaught's chief-of-staff in Ireland.[36] His most recent appointment had been GOC in Egypt, where at times he had shown his determination to back his own judgement rather than refer politically sensitive matters to the War Office or to the local political advisers.[37] His recall from

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36. See Sir George Arthur General Sir John Maxwell (London, 1932).

37. In 1915 General Maxwell, GOC Egypt, had been approached by the correspondent of the Rousskiya Wiedomosti, Mr Vladimir Jabotinsky (see p117), with a proposal to raise an all-Jewish unit. Without bothering the War Office, Maxwell had agreed. (This may be seen, according to one's interpretation of Israeli history, either as the start of the Irgun Zwai Leumi or the Israel Defence Force, or both.) See PRO file 32/11/348, minute 2, WO 20/Gen/3844.

Egypt, he had written, was because 'the political people have got their knives into me'.[38] When he arrived in Ireland on Friday, 28 April 1916 the General possessed sweeping powers, which he evidently intended using without the inconvenience of political advice.

Maxwell oversaw the final operations against the rebels, whose situation was now desperate. In the GPO, where Connolly lay wounded, Pearse issued his final bulletin. Then flames engulfed the building and on Friday afternoon the defenders withdrew. The next day, at about half-past three in the afternoon, Pearse surrendered his sword at the post in Parnell Street to Brigadier General Lowe. Within another 24 hours the Rising had everywhere ended in failure. Some 300 men and women were dead, 120 of them police and military, 56 volunteers, the remainder civilians. Nearly a thousand were wounded, in about the same proportion. Damage to buildings by fire, artillery, close-quarter fighting, and looting, represented nearly one-third of Ireland's total annual revenue. From the improvised prisoner compound in which they had spent their first night in captivity the captured rebels were marched away, booed and jeered by Dubliners. It must have seemed to many of them that the entire enterprise had been a catastrophe. Pearse, however, had not yet finished with his deed, and what was to come would begin a process leading to the accomplishment of his ambition.

The Death I Shall Die

During the 1914-18 War more than 300 British servicemen were executed for offences such as cowardice and desertion.[39] The scale and nature of the fighting imposed such strains that only harsh discipline could hold armies together. In 1916 the struggle was not going in Britain's favour. For United Kingdom subjects at such a time to side with the enemy, murdering 120 police and military, forcing the

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38. O'Broin (i), p 115.

39. Ministry of Defence, PS2(c) (Army), Information provided to writer. (The breakdown was desertion (247), cowardice (18), quitting post (6), murder (19), mutiny (2), disobedience (3), striking superior (5), shamefully casting arms (2) and sleeping at post (1). The figures include 3 officers and 36 Commonwealth and Empire troops.)

redeployment of many units in order to deal with the situation, and in the process bringing death and destruction to an important city, was a matter of the utmost gravity. From the viewpoint of authority, a view shared in the immediate aftermath of rebellion by many Irish, the rebels were guilty of serious crimes and their leaders deserved exemplary punishment. It is scarcely surprising that Maxwell decided to take a firm line, and in this decision he is hardly to be criticized. Where criticism may be valid is over the methods employed and the length to which the line might have been taken.

The General seems to have been impressed by knowledge, gained presumably during his earlier tour in Ireland, that after the collapse of the 1867 Fenian rebellion the spirit of revolt had been kept alive for months by speeches in defence of captured leaders at their public trials. He evidently favoured quick, secret trials by courts-martial, immediately followed by executions where appropriate. This at any rate is what occurred. On 3 May Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Tom Clarke were executed by firing-squad following trial on the previous day. On the 4th, Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan and William Pearse, Patrick's young brother, suffered the same end. Only one man died on the 5th, John McBride. On 6 May it was announced that death sentences passed on Countess Markiewicz and several other participants in the rebellion had been commuted to life imprisonment. Eamonn Ceannt, Con Colbert, Sean Heuston and Michael Mallin were shot on the 8th, and Thomas Kent on the 9th, a total at this date of thirteen. A proclamation issued by Maxwell's headquarters on 11 May spoke of German intrigue and propaganda, loss of life and acts calculated to imperil the realm, and hoped that 'the most severe sentences on the known organisers of this detestable Rising' would deter intriguers.[40] The inference was that the executions had run their course. However on the 12th two more convicted men were shot, James Connolly and Sean MacDiarmada. The fifteen dead included all seven members of the IRB's Military Council, one man convicted of murder, five senior field commanders, one quite minor deputy commander, and William Pearse.

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40. 'Proclamation issued by HQ The Forces in Ireland', 11 May 1916, quoted Dudley Edwards, p 325.

Maxwell's secrecy extended in all directions, so that neither Asquith nor the Lord Lieutenant were much better informed of what was going on than the public.[41] These men became increasingly uneasy about the toll in lives, and the sinister manner in which each day brought another terse announcement, while no one from the Prime Minister to the humblest citizen knew when this painful process would end. In the oft quoted words of Elizabeth,Countess of Fingall, it was 'as though they watched a stream of blood coming from beneath a closed door'.[42] Before the executions were over Asquith attempted to recover some of the political control he had so recklessly abandoned when he delivered Ireland into unknown military hands. 'Maxwell should be reminded', he directed through the War Minister, 'that any wholesale punishment by death might easily cause a revulsion of feeling in Britain and lay up a store of future trouble in Ireland'.[43] By side-stepping political control, even when he had been given the power to act independently, Maxwell undermined Asquith's confidence in the policy of suppression so recently begun. This lack of confidence would prove as unhelpful to the General's endeavours in the security field as Maxwell's style over the executions would be ruinous to the Prime Minister's hopes in the political arena.

The condemned rebels played out their roles with courage and dignity to the end. It is sometimes said that the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue are staffed by failed poets. Of the seven signatories of the Easter Proclamation three, Pearse, Plunkett and MacDonagh were poets, and not necessarily failed ones, whose talents made them powerful natural propagandists. 'Gentlemen of the Court-Martial', Thomas MacDonagh had said at his trial, 'I choose to think that you have but done your duty, according to your lights, in sentencing me to death. I thank you for your courtesy. It would not be seemly for me to go to my doom without trying to express, however inadequately, my sense of the high honour I enjoy in being of those predestined in this generation to die for Irish Freedom ... '.[44] Joseph Plunkett was an invalid recovering from glandular tuberculosis when he joined Pearse and Connolly at the GPO.

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41. O'Broin (i), pp 130-134.

42. Quoted Dudley Edwards, p 325.

43. O'Broin (i), p 130.

44 Quoted Duff, p 192.

His health was worse by the time of his sentencing to death. But at 1.30 am on the morning of his execution he was married in the chapel of Kilmainham gaol to Grace Gifford, sister of MacDonagh's wife. The sincerity of this union is not open to question. Nevertheless, the poignancy of the ceremony provided wonderful material for subsequent propaganda. Pearse's address to the court-martial included these words:

> First among all earthly things, as a boy and as a man, I have worked for Irish Freedom. I have helped organize, to arm, to train, and to discipline my fellow-countrymen to the sole end that, when the time came they might fight for Irish freedom. The time as it seemed to me, did come and we went into the fight. I am glad that we did, we seem to have lost, we have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose, to fight is to win, we have kept faith with the past, and handed a tradition to the future. 45

It is difficult to see how the Government, whatever its methods in the aftermath of the Rising, could have avoided bringing the ringleaders to trial, and it is equally hard to imagine any outcome of trial different from what occurred. Conceivably an imaginative act of mercy on the part of the authorities could have commuted the death sentences, possibly as part of some political act of reconciliation. Such an act would have raised its own dangers, both in England and Ireland, and even might have compromised military discipline in the field. Tempting though it is to say with hindsight that such mercy was obviously the sensible course, missed by the blind and heartless English, such a conclusion lacks honesty. We may more accurately deduce that Pearse always knew the penalty of his deed would be shooting, and that his death along with some of his colleagues was a necessary part of the deed. The English co-operated in the final act, but it was part of Pearse's design that they should have no easy alternative.

On the evening after he had sentenced Patrick Pearse to death, the President of the Court-Martial, Brigadier-General Blackader, said with regret:

> I have just done one of the hardest tasks I have ever had to do. I have had to condemn to death one of the finest characters I have ever come across. There must be something very wrong in the state of things that makes a man like that a Rebel. 46

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45. Quoted Duff, p 191

46. Quoted Dudley Edwards, p 319.

The 'propaganda of the deed' was already beginning to work, even against an enemy.

The Aftermath of the Deed

Writing about the period of the executions, an Irish historian has noted:

> Many do find it inexplicable that the first thirteen to be executed went to their death, without a significant Irish voice, at home or abroad, being raised in protest. Such factually is historical truth. In terms of appeals for clemency, or reasoned vindication of the motives of the insurrectionists, it was the period of "the Great Silence".[47]

We may suggest that there are periods of incubation before a new idea takes hold of the mind. There is, too, a period of shock following an unexpected and traumatic experience, during which the senses tend to be numbed. It also needs to be remembered that most of the Dublin daily newspapers were owned by Anglo-Irish of ascendency stock, inclined to establishment attitudes. Dublin itself was in 1916 a very 'English' city. Many of the working folk who had jeered the captured rebels had sons or husbands in the British Army and depended on the Government in one way or another for their livelihood. Maxwell was no doubt encouraged in his policy by the Irish Times 1-3 May issue which insisted that 'the rapine and bloodshed of the past week must be finished with a severity which will make any repetition of them impossible for generations to come'.[48] Dr Tom Garvin sees it as 'an odd characteristic of Irish society that its intellectuals and journalists are often very out-of-touch with public opinion' and suggests that this may have been so in 1916.[49] If this was the case, papers like the Irish Times may have done an inadvertent service to Pearse's cause by putting the British authorities off their guard against the real dangers of a swing of opinion towards sympathy with the executed leaders and the rebel cause.

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47. M O'Dubhghaill Insurrection Fires at Easter Tide, (Cork, 1966) p 290.

48. The quotations from contemporary Irish newspapers are taken from Appendix I (The Irish Times) and Appendix II (Cork Examiner, Free Press and Irish Independent) to Owen Dudley Edwards and Fergus Pyle (editors) 1916 The Easter Rising, (London, 1968).

49. Dr Tom Garvin (i), University College, Dublin, letter to the Writer dated 30 June 1977. (Quoted with kind permission)

Country districts were probably more pro-rebel than Dublin. Here, however, there may initially have been an inhibiting sense of shame at the failure of the plan for a nationwide revolt. On 29 April William O'Brien's Cork Free Press complained that 'Ireland was given arms to get massacred for doing the dirty work of the half-beaten German Empire' and on 1 May the Cork Examiner argued that 'Amnesty in this case would not be generous. It would only be just', views very different from the Irish Times.

The Dublin Irish Independent could not be published until 6 May because of damage to its works. When it reappeared, it denounced the Rising. Maxwell's 1 May proclamation, hinting that the executions were complete, evidently worried the Independent's capitalist owner and gave rise to a remarkable article on 12 May. 'Certain of the leaders remain undealt with and the part they played was worse than that of some of those who have paid the extreme penalty. Are they because of an indiscriminate demand for clemency to get off lightly, while others who were no more prominent have been executed?' The target of this outburst was James Connolly, the militant socialist. The Independent need not have worried. By the time the edition was on the streets Connolly was dead.

The 'indiscriminate demand for clemency' referred to had begun, characteristically, in England and then spread to Ireland. On 6 May, after eight executions, the Daily News had followed the lead of the Daily Chronicle in pleading for mercy. On 10 May George Bernard Shaw wrote to the Daily News asserting that 'an Irishman resorting to arms to achieve the independence of his country is doing only what Englishmen will do if it be their misfortune to be invaded and conquered by the Germans in the course of the present war'.[50] This subtle propaganda in the revolutionary cause was exactly what Pearse might have hoped for. It was worth more than a German expeditionary force. Next day in the House of Commons the Irish MP John Dillon denounced the shootings. Irish papers other than the Independent changed their

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50. Quoted Dorothy Macardle The Irish Republic, (Dublin, 1951) pp 186-187.

tune after the first 13 deaths. The secrecy, and the consecutive nature of the executions, spanning nine days, greatly affected public attitudes. James Stephens wrote these lines:

> And day by day they told that one was dead,
> And day by day the seasons mourned for you
> Until that count of woe was finished,
> And Spring remembered all was yet to do. [51]

Such sentiments were reinforced by errors of judgement on the part of Maxwell and his staff. Neither William Pearse nor John MacBride played leading parts,[52] and their executions appeared vindictive, as though the former's relationship to Patrick and the latter's leadership in 1900 of Irishmen fighting with the Boers had singled them out for death.[53] The shootings of the desperately ill Joseph Plunkett and the wounded James Connolly also offended. On the day that Connolly died, 12 May, Asquith visited Dublin to see for himself what was going on.

During the course of his tour the Prime Minister asked to see some captured rebels. It is easy to understand his purpose; he was trying to find out what motives lay beneath the Rising, as part of a general survey of opinion. We may wonder,nevertheless,how far Asquith was influenced by rebel propaganda assumptions on the one hand and a sense of embarrassment or shame at the recent executions on the other. If he had really believed his own Government's declared assumptions, would he have been likely to visit a group of murderers and criminals? By talking to them man-to-man, he unwittingly strengthened their claims to legitimacy. As one historian has put it: 'All at once the prisoners saw that they had not fought in vain'.[54] The deed was casting its spell on another enemy, and when he returned to Westminster Asquith told the Commons that the system of government in Ireland had broken down.

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51. Quoted Warre B Wells and N Marlowe A History of the Irish Rebellion of 1916 (Dublin and London, 1916), p 205.
52. William Pearse apparently tried hard at his court-martial to convince the court that his role was more important than was the case, and may have succeeded too well.
53. Concerning John MacBride and Maud Gonne, see O'Brien (ii).
54. W A Phillips The Rebellion in Ireland, (London, 1923) p 107.

On 17 May Irish newspapers published an open letter from Edward O'Dwyer, Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick, to Maxwell, in which the Bishop denounced the executions. This worried Maxwell, who was beginning to realise that opinion was changing in Ireland, and caused him to write to Asquith. 'I am afraid this action (by the Bishop) has done some harm and incited others to defy authority. I am getting reports now from the RIC (Royal Irish Constabulary) that priests are offering Masses for the repose of the souls of those who have died, or been executed, martyrs to their country's cause, etc. It is an exceedingly difficult matter to deal with this question, and I think if his Holiness the Pope could be induced to advise the Cardinal Archbishop and the Bishops in Ireland to prevent priests from mixing themselves up with matters political, seditious or unconnected with their spiritual position, some good might come of it.' [55]

Besides the executions, the security forces' task of rooting out disaffected elements and suspected supporters of the Rising was affecting the general public. Although many were quickly released, 3149 men and 77 women were arrested by police and military. 1862 men and 5 women were interned in England, in addition to 160 prisoners who had been convicted by court-martial. In a manner that Pearse would surely have approved, and may have foreseen, the aftermath of the Deed made ordinary Irish people feel the weight of military occupation.

The slow process of conversion of opinion from fierce criticism of the Rising to grudging respect and sympathy, and finally to uncritical praise, was assisted by propaganda. This was generated by Sinn Féin, IRB members, the Gaelic League (which was effectively under IRB control) and that diffuse but persistent current of Irish opinion that needs only to be scratched to exhibit anti-British sentiments. Journalists, poets, political agitators and authors played their separate roles, not for the most part as obedient cogs in a giant publicity machine, but as individuals whose fine-tuned ears knew instinctively the appropriate chords. No account of the Easter Rising seen by this writer pauses to reflect on the mechanics of opinion-forming that consolidated the achievement of the Deed, yet the final effects may have relied as much on propaganda as the initial

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55. Quoted Arthur, p 261.

effects depended on the executions. This may be due to some Irish natural talent in this direction, and it may be because certain key figures in the operation appreciated that propaganda is one of the forms of conflict whose heroes must forever go unsung.

The 'Great Silence' that lasted throughout the first 13 executions was probably due to shock and revulsion, strengthened in Dublin by Protestant attitudes and English sympathies. If we knew the names on the IRB membership list at the time we might find an editor and a leader-writer here or there, and this might lead us to ask why such individuals published nothing that might have saved their friends. In any case we can ask why none of the IRB's more influential members wrote letters to the press, or canvassed political leaders, or called meetings, or even threatened revenge, in an effort to prevent capital punishment. One answer that springs to mind is that in the aftermath of a disastrous uprising the paramount need was to preserve the Organisation, and that a 'low profile' was the order of the day. Another answer, which does not necessarily conflict with the first, says that the IRB realised that Pearse and his colleagues had to die, if anything of value was to be salvaged from the wreck.[56]

There was soon a thriving cottage industry in heroic relics commemorating the executed men and the epic of the Rising: mourning badges, Sinn Féin flags, facsimiles of the dead men's last letters, poems and statements, postcards of heroes and battle scenes, holy symbols and national emblems. The old rebel songs were heard everywhere. This propaganda, designed to raise the status of the Rising as an example to be followed in some future armed struggle, was backed up by demonstrations at Requiem Masses, resolutions of public bodies and the setting up of a National Aid Association to succour the families of prisoners and internees. The poems of W B Yeats had shattering emotive power. Once the dead leaders had been accepted as martyrs, which given the history of Anglo-Irish relations was

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56. The willingness in later years of the Irish Republican Army to allow and even encourage its members on hunger strike in prisons to die, suggests that the second answer is credible.

virtually inevitable in the circumstances, it was a short step to see the rebels as soldier-heroes fighting in the noble cause of Irish freedom. Not to have been with them became a cause of shame.

Parallel with all this, themes were developed to discredit the British authorities and Army, beyond the obvious exploitation of the executions. No conflict has ever been fought without acts of cruelty and stupidity on both sides. By burrowing into every such act committed by the British in the suppression of the Rising, propagandists succeeded in shifting the burden of guilt for the whole affair from Republican to British shoulders. This offensive use of propaganda has special powers. It can undermine confidence in authority among 'neutrals' and 'enemies', in this case, particularly and respectively, the United States and the United Kingdom. By pressing authority to conduct enquiries into alleged misconduct the revolutionary or his front organisations are certain to win propaganda points. If the authorities refuse, they exhibit guilt and a contempt for justice; if they agree, they will either prove the alleged crime, in which case they publicise their own shame with greater credibility and to a wider audience than any other methods could possibly achieve, or they disprove the allegations, in which case they can be accused of a 'cover-up', of dishonesty, and so on. Furthermore much police and army effort is diverted from the role of countering insurgency to the task of investigating the alleged offences, and security force morale is apt to suffer.

The key issues in this campaign were the murders by Captain Bowen-Colthurst of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington and three other innocents, alleged murders of civilians in North King Street by unknown members of the South Staffordshire Regiment, and the use by the Army of artillery during the fighting, with inevitable widespread damage. The first case was eventually brought to trial at which the captain was found, on the medical evidence of two Dublin doctors, 'guilty but insane'. However the trial, which helped to satisfy public indignation, was convened only after delay and procrastination, not to mention efforts at various levels to hush the whole matter up, so that the indignation went round the world to Britain's discredit before being partially disarmed. The second case was never satisfactorily resolved. The probability is that troops fresh from

England, many of whose opponents in savage street fighting used plain clothes to infiltrate British positions and then fire at the soldiers from the rear, lost their self-control. As for the artillery fire, this was often inaccurate, but no more so, one may imagine, than in many engagements. Better trained troops might have managed with less and commanders more concerned for public opinion might have tried not to use it at all. In the circumstances as they were, the requirements to minimise military casualties and to reduce rebel positions quickly dictated its use. The Deed brought on the damage, and the damage worked for the Deed.

All this made a sharp propaganda weapon, which was thrust at Britain up to the hilt. Wishing on the one hand to support his troops, and on the other to reply to criticism, Maxwell adopted the worst possible course. He tried to belittle the accusations. When this failed to still the clamour he made partial admissions that some of the stories might be true. Finally he convened courts of inquiry into specific cases. By this time the scent was cold and nothing definite was proved. Thus Maxwell was made to appear insincere and incapable. 'Great capital is being made out of these (North King Street deaths)', the General wrote to Asquith, 'but the cold-blooded shooting of soldiers, police and civilians by rebels is passed over in silence'.[57]

The cruel realities of propaganda warfare were being borne home to the perplexed Maxwell, for once the rebels were seen by Irish opinion as soldier-heroes, their violent acts were automatically justified. Murder is expurgated by favourable propaganda. On the other hand the British, being seen less as fellow citizens of the United Kingdom and increasingly as alien oppressors, were by the same means deprived of moral authority. According to Bishop O'Dwyer, the executed leaders 'had been shot in cold blood'.[58]

As opinion in Ireland hardened behind the Republican cause, Redmond's Home Rule Party lost its power. The philosophy of Pearse became widely accepted and his writings were taken seriously. Now that oppression and conflict were real for all to see, the New Testament of Irish History, the cult of violence and the hymn of hatred were

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57. Quoted Arthur, p 260.

58. Letter from Bishop O'Dwyer to General Maxwell quoted O'Dubhghaill, p 318.

acceptable to people who a year earlier might have laughed them to scorn. The ancient myths had come to life again. The British had used the term Sinn Féiner as a catch-all for Fenians and rebels of all shades of green. In the months following the Rising Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin Party, which had played no part in the insurrection, became the focus of revolutionary loyalty. The internees and prisoners who were released from British camps and prisons in December 1916 and June 1917 were welcomed home as heroes. Soon their leaders were influential in Sinn Féin politics or were organising an underground movement for future armed revolt, the Irish Republican Army. In December 1918 a general election brought a landslide victory for Sinn Féin, whose propaganda machine completed the mobilisation of the Irish masses by the skilful exploitation of unwise British attempts to introduce conscription to Ireland. In the guerrilla war for independence that began in January 1919 propaganda was the decisive instrument, working on the guilt feelings of the English, which the Deed had fanned, and by indirect leverage through the United States. The treaty of 1921 brought independence to Ireland, but only to the 26 counties that shared Pearse's myths and wished to follow his 'tradition to the future'.

The British Response

The men who ran British propaganda during World War I were gifted amateurs drafted for the duration. On the Home Front, in America, and against the enemy, they did some effective work. Their brief was to support the war effort against Germany; internal politics and subversion were no concern of theirs. Working in mysterious secrecy, they hid themselves as far as possible from the hostile gaze of civil servants and servicemen, few if any of whom understood the power or the workings of propaganda. Thus it would never have occurred to Maxwell or to any of the Dublin Castle administrators to request expert assistance in this field. Instead they relied upon the negative powers of censorship. 'Propaganda of the deed' cannot be stifled in this way.

No attempts were made while the Courts-Martial were in session to emphasize the enormity of the event, the innocent lives lost and

the sufferings of the Dublin poor, and thus to justify in advance the penalties being inflicted. On the one hand the British tended to ridicule the Rising and dismiss it as an extended street brawl, an argument distinctly at odds with 'the most severe sentences on the known organizers', and on the other hand they over-stressed the German involvement, presenting it as the driving force behind the movement instead, as many in Ireland knew it, as an available means to an Irish end. By pressing this argument on an audience that recognised it as over-stated, the British lost credibility.

For his responsibility towards the executions of 'Immortal Patriots Newly Dead'[59], as one poem called the dead leaders, the General earned the propaganda name 'Bloody Maxwell'. He was not equipped by training, experience or temperament to conduct a war of words and ideas, least of all against the Irish. Indeed it is doubtful if any Englishman could have competed successfully in this arena. What the British needed were Irish voices speaking convincingly in favour of moderation. The executions and 'suppression' effectively prevented this. Even as Asquith's chat to the prisoners had implied 'prisoner of war' status, Maxwell's own utterances suggested that he too saw the military action that crushed the Rising as war rather than 'duties in aid of the Civil Power'.

The General sent his main report of the incident to London on 25 May. Next day he despatched a follow-up dealing with the allegations of misconduct by troops. The paragraphs concerned with North King Street read as follows:

> (4) No doubt in districts where the fighting was fiercest, such as in the North King Street, parties of men, under the great provocation of being shot at from front and rear, seeing their comrades fall from the fire of snipers, burst into suspected houses and killed such male members as were found, it is perfectly possible that some innocent citizens were shot in this manner, but it must be borne in mind that they could have left their houses and passed through the cordons had they so wished.
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> (5) The blame for such casualties must be on the shoulders of those who engineered rebellion in the city.

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59. Joyce Kilmer's poem quoted O'Dubhghaill, p 333.

(6) The number of such incidents that have been brought to my notice is happily few, less than I expected, considering the magnitude of the task. 60

It is one thing to see the provocation of half-trained soldiers as a strong mitigating factor for any offences committed, something to be held in their favour when tried by court-martial; it is quite another to accept the soldiers' reactions as being perfectly normal, something to be expected and condoned. Carried to its logical conclusion, the latter view implies not only a state of war, that relieves the soldier of the 'peace time' legal constraints of 'duties in aid', but also a war without the restraints of international conventions. This in turn undermines the assumptions upon which the rebel leaders were brought to trial. Maxwell, it would seem, wanted to have things both ways. Fortunately for the British argument, his report was never published in its original, forthright and potentially damaging form.

Asquith's only alteration to Maxwell's report was to remove the words 'killed such male members as were found' from paragraph (4). However other more cautious eyes scanned the pages and by the time the London Gazette published the reports on 21 June 1916 the three paragraphs were down to two:

(4) Whilst fighting continued under conditions at once so confused and so trying it is possible that some innocent citizens were shot. It must be remembered that the struggle was in many cases of a house to house character, that sniping was continuous and persistent and that it was often extremely difficult to distinguish between those who were or had been firing upon the troops and those who had for various reasons chosen to remain in the scene of the fighting instead of leaving the houses and passing through the cordons.

(5) The number of such incidents that has been brought to notice is very insignificant. 61

This version saw the killings as mistakes, tragic incidents in the fight to restore law and order, and was safe.

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60. PRO file 79/Irish/493. W032 9510.

61. PRO op cit.

It would be unfair to pile too much blame onto Maxwell for the failure of Government propaganda in the aftermath of the Deed. He was sent to Ireland to suppress, not to seduce. Asquith's surrender of control at a critical moment was as fatal to Britain's interests, as Pearse's deed was decisive to Ireland's future.

Perceptions of the Deed

V I Lenin's reactions to the Rising were summarised in a thesis written in July 1916 and published in October in Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata. He chided those on the political Left who had dismissed the Irish rebellion as a 'putsch' and expressed the opinion that 'the struggle of the oppressed nations in Europe, a struggle capable of going to the length of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down the iron discipline in the army and martial law, will "sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe" infinitely more than a more developed rebellion in a remote colony'.[62] He concluded that the Rising had come too soon, since the 'European revolt of the proletariat has not yet matured'.[63] Nevertheless, Lenin attached value to such a premature movement for its de-stabilising effect, hoping no doubt that the eventual outcome would be the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact the Irish rebellion of 1919, like the 1916 Rising, was nationalist and Republican in character, being for the most part organised by middle-class, politically conservative leaders. The socialist philosophy of James Connolly did not die with him, but it has never gained wide acceptance in Ireland.

Although the Rising did little for the cause of socialism, it changed many Irish political perceptions. There is disagreement among historians as to whether the Deed represented the culmination of a long tradition or the imposition of a new ideology. The first view is generally accepted. This argues that prior to 1916 the people of Ireland had been in an unpatriotic slumber and had lost the consciousness of national identity. Without the Deed, this interpretation goes on, Ireland would have been fobbed off with a mere semblance of Home Rule. The second, revisionist viewpoint is that

62. Quoted Edwards and Pyle, pp 191-195.

63. Ibid.

Pearse's myths were largely of his own invention and were artificially grafted onto the Irish consciousness at the expense of finer traditions.[64] It is argued by this school that the many thousands of Irishmen who died bravely in the Allied cause in the 1914-18 War were, by the Deed, virtually deprived of honour in their own land. Ever since the Rising caught hold of the Nation's imagination, these critics continue, Irishmen have been 'asked to disown their own past ... to censure as unpatriotic the common Irishmen who were not attracted by the new revolutionary ideas, but who adhered to an ancient tradition ... to apologise for their fellow-countrymen who accepted loyally the serious guidance of the Church ... to despise as unmanly those of their countrymen who preferred to solve problems, if possible, by peaceful rather than by violent means'.[65]

The truth may lie midway. Certainly the consciousness of Irish nationality was very old indeed, as were the historical myths and the animosity towards England. These provided the necessary pre-propaganda. The Rising on the other hand imposed one new ideological ingredient at least - the myth of the Deed itself. Fused with the old myths and exploited as mobilisation propaganda, this created an intolerant climate of public opinion, as Professor Ellul explains:

> We are here in the presence of an organised myth that tries to take hold of the entire person. Through the myth it creates, propaganda imposes a complete range of intuitive knowledge, susceptible of only one interpretation, unique and one-sided, and precluding any divergence. This myth becomes so powerful that it invades every area of consciousness, leaving no faculty or motivation intact. It stimulates in the individual a feeling of exclusiveness, and produces a biased attitude. The myth has such motive force that, once accepted, it controls the whole of the individual, who becomes immune to any other influence. This explains the totalitarian attitude that the individual adopts - whenever a myth has been successfully created - and that simply reflects the totalitarian action of propaganda on him. 66

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64. Revisionists include the late Rev Professor Shaw and Dr Cruise O'Brien.

65. Shaw, pp 117-118, 151.

66. Ellul (i), p 11.

The revisionists have had a hard task trying to penetrate bias, and in their endeavours have perhaps over-stated their historical arguments. The real debate may be less about facts as interpretation. Here the totalitarian after-effects of the propaganda still confuse.

If in today's Ireland the myth has to live alongside academic scepticism, the worst it has to face in England is ignorance and disinterest. Insofar as the ordinary Englishman thinks about the Rising at all, he does so in mindless acceptance of chauvinistic Republican propaganda, of the sort offered by writers like Redmond Fitzgerald[67] and Constantine Fitzgibbon.[68] In America ignorance owes less to disinterest and more to careful protection. Having done so much to support the IRB and encourage rebellion, Irish Americans are reluctant to allow a relapse towards rationality, and they are helped by the wider American sentiment that sees all forms of opposition to British 'oppression' in a favourable light. Thus Professor Norman Cantor can write in an introduction: 'Protest in the twentieth century has led to social change and,more often than not, to social melioration; revolution has been the road to chaos, civil war, and new tyranny.'[69] Then in the chapter of the same book that deals with 1916 he can say: 'The Easter Rising was the model for all liberation movements against Western imperialism in the twentieth century and for all protest movements generally. Endless debate, piecemeal reform, tedious compromise - they did not bring social liberation and personal exultation, which can be achieved only through immediate confrontation, no matter how futile, and martyrdom, no matter how certain.'[70] This indulgent attitude must account, too, for Leon Uris's remark, as offensive, surely, to Pearse and his colleagues as to the English:

> It seems that the British might have learned something about the Irish after all their experience. It is one thing to kill enemy soldiers in battle but one just doesn't go around shooting poets. 71

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67. Fitzgerald, op cit.

68. Constantine Fitzgibbon Out of the Lion's Paw; Ireland wins her Freedom (London, 1969).

69. Cantor, p XIV.

70. Cantor, p 40.

71. Jill & Leon Uris Ireland, A Terrible Beauty (New York, 1975), p 149.

Discussion

Several hundred years of the English connection had created by the mid-nineteenth century powerful revolutionary pre-propaganda in Ireland. This rested in part upon nationalism, in part on religious sectarianism, and in part on social factors, particularly the 'agrarian tradition'.[72] Efforts by Irish leaders to build upon this foundation tended to waver between the constitutional and unconstitutional, and sometimes both courses were used at once. Separatist Irish Republicanism originated late in the nineteenth century as a modern political ideology and tended to attract support from ardent advocates of the unconstitutional method. In the early years of the twentieth century these men discovered that many ordinary Irishmen showed a reduced enthusiasm for the use of violence, a change brought about by British constitutional measures that had satisfied many needs and seemed about to grant Home Rule. For the Irish Republican Brotherhood, whose raison d'etre had always promoted means above ends, the trend was worrying. Agitation propaganda was needed to awaken the masses from their 'unpatriotic slumber' and lead them into violent action. Only in this way, the IRB argued, could Ireland win real freedom.

Patrick Pearse's propaganda focused the diffused light of this philosophy into a bright narrow beam. His primary target audience was the mass of Irish people. No doubt he would have liked this mass to include Protestants as well as Catholics, but finding no way to attract the former he put them out of his mind and carried on as though they did not exist. The 'propaganda of the deed' of Easter 1916 and its aftermath raised Republicanism to pride of place in Irish politics, discredited the constitutional course, and began the mobilisation of popular support for full-scale revolution. All the pre-existing attitudes and fundamental trends of Irish opinion, formed and nurtured by centuries of pre-propaganda, were by the Deed shaped and intensified to the point where ordinary men and women would take up arms, kill, risk being killed, and give total allegiance to a cause that most had previously ignored or even ridiculed.

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72. See Tom Garvin (ii) Nationalism, Secret Societies and Mass Political Mobilisation in Ireland based on a paper before the ECPR Workshop on Nationalism and Territorial Identity, Strathclyde, (8-14 January 1978).

Pearse began with three advantages. Through the IRB and the larger associations covertly controlled by the Brotherhood, he had organisation. His target audience were 'friends', that is to say the Catholic Irish, to whom he could communicate effectively. And below the calm surface of Irish political life lay the pre-existing attitudes and trends. His problem was the lack of facts to back the case he wished to argue. The Rising provided some of the necessary facts and the British reaction appeared to make real the facts of oppression and cruelty. So far as 'friends' were concerned, Pearse's propaganda was extremely successful, going even as far as shifting the attitude of the Church to one of support of a movement that was increasingly seen as 'legitimate'. 'Neutral' reaction in such countries as America was mixed, but the Rising provided a reference point that was to be important as a propaganda symbol in 1919. A remarkable outcome of the Deed was its effect on the 'enemy' - the English. Partly through the efforts of Irish spokesmen in London, and partly through the skilful use of 'guilt transfer', ambivilance, uneasy conscience and a sneaking acceptance of the legitimacy of the Rising began to grow. Propaganda began, but did not in this case end, at home.

The message style was essentially emotional, backed by quasi-rational arguments. Techniques included nostalgia - Pearse's New Testament, appeal - to the old animosities, glittering generalities - the Proclamation of the Republic, purity of motive - Pearse's court-martial address, symbolism - the exploitation of the dead men's relics, character assassination - 'Bloody Maxwell', and the bandwagon - by which Sinn Féin directed the mobilisation begun by the Rising. Themes used were mainly those appropriate to the mobilisation phase of revolution and included hatred, the righteousness and legitimacy of the cause and its inevitable triumph, allegiance, moral certainty, guilt transfer in connection with 'counter-productive' measures, the glorification of heroes and of violence, and security force incompetence. Rebels received protection by the themes of innocence, special status, and the security these conjured up against retribution.

As for the British counter-measures, the main lesson may be that surrender of political control over a tense political situation is

likely to lead to problems in all areas, including the war of words. Another observation is that awareness of the power, aims and methods of revolutionary propaganda is as important an asset to politicians, civil servants and security forces involved in countering insurgency as any other body of knowledge. Expertise in the field of propaganda is desirable, but often it is not the utterances of authority that affect public opinion so much as the actions of police, soldiers and administrators. In 1916 it was Maxwell's style of action that was particularly damaging. An expert on his staff could have prevented the propaganda defeat only if Maxwell had been prepared to accept advice in areas far removed from what most people would see as the preserve of the propagandist.

In their efforts to influence Irish opinion in the aftermath of the Deed the British were handicapped by having to address a foreign target audience. Any English propaganda in Ireland was bound to be weak. After they had lost their contact with the Irish people through respected Irish political leaders, the British could govern Ireland only by force. After Pearse's deed, force was certain to be reciprocal. Propaganda brought violence back to Irish politics, dashing the hopes of the Dublin pacifist Francis Sheehy-Skeffingham. The words that follow were part of an open letter which he wrote in 1915 to Thomas MacDonagh, published in the Irish Citizen. One year later the author, like his ideal, was dead.

> You justify no war except a war to end oppression, to establish the right. What warmonger ever spoke otherwise when it was necessary to enlist the people? ... European militarism has drenched Europe in blood; Irish militarism may only crimson the fields of Ireland. For us that would be disaster enough ... I want to see the manhood of Ireland no longer hypnotised by the glamour of "the glory of arms", no longer blind to the horrors of organised murder. 73

73. Quoted Edwards and Pyle, pp 149-152.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOICE OF ISRAEL

PROPAGANDA FOR A JEWISH STATE

Background to the Study

Throughout the nineteen hundred years of their dispersion around the world the Jews retained hope that they would one day return to their ancient homeland, Israel. The expression 'Next year in Jerusalem' sustained this aspiration, but until late in the 19th century the idea existed in vague hopes rather than in practical schemes.
Dr. Theodor Herzl gave the notion political form by creating Zionism, a movement dedicated to the establishment of a Jewish State in the territory that was then called Palestine. During the first world war Britain ejected the Turks from the Levant, proclaimed in ambiguous terms her support for a Jewish National Home in Palestine[1], and assumed the governance of that land. In 1922 the League of Nations formally awarded Britain the Mandate to rule Palestine on the League's behalf, with terms of reference that confirmed the rights of the Jews to establish their National Home provided 'that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'[2], who were, for the most part, Arabs. Thus was created an opportunity for Britain to enhance her strategic position in the Near East at the price of administering what was, from the outset and by its very nature, an incurable dichotomy.

Under the terms of the Mandate Jewish immigration was to be facilitated by the Palestine Administration. This was done until 1939, by which date the Arab population had expressed, by means of a full-scale rebellion, their displeasure at having what they regarded as their land invaded by foreigners. While this insurrection lasted the Arabs seized control of 'liberated areas' in the hill country, terrorised their own community into supporting the revolt, and brought death, destruction and

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1. The 'Balfour Declaration' 2 November 1917, reproduced Doreen Ingram Palestine Papers 1917-1922 (London, 1972) p 18.

2. Mandate for Palestine, League of Nations, 24 July 1922 (Reproduced as Appendix to John Marlowe (i) Rebellion in Palestine. (London, 1946) Quote is from second paragraph of preamble.

near-anarchy to the whole land.[3] This experience caused the British to look carefully at Article 6 of the Mandate, dealing with immigration, and to note that the Mandatory was required to encourage immigration only so long as 'the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced'.[4] These words were used to justify the British Government's White Paper of 1939, which restricted Jewish immigration to 75,000 over the subsequent five years, after which there was to be no more immigration without the consent of the Arabs. This 'White Paper' policy came at a time when Hitler's anti-semitic schemes were injecting the Zionist purpose with a desperate urgency. As it was only too obviously a concession to Arab violence, many Jews concluded that the White Paper policy could be overturned only if they resorted to the same means. In September 1939 World War II broke out.

The Zionist leaders appreciated that Nazi Germany was the Jews' first enemy, and consequently adopted a policy which Mr David Ben Gurion put into the words: 'We shall fight the war as if there were no White Paper and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war'.[5] Ben Gurion was gradually assuming effective leadership of the World Zionist Organisation from its distinguished champion Dr Chaim Weizmann. The new leader's war-time policy was to take all possible steps to open Palestine to Jewish fugitives from Hitler's tyranny, by means both legal and illegal, to build up the strength and efficiency of the Jewish Agency's illegal 'private army', Haganah, but otherwise to avoid conflict with the British. The Jewish Agency was a body created under the terms of the Mandate to advise and co-operate with the Mandatory in matters affecting the National Home and act as a liaison between international Jewry, especially the World Zionist Organisation, the Jews of Palestine and the Palestine Administration.

During the course of the war news of the massacre of Jews leaked from German-occupied Europe. The emotional impact upon world Jewry and particularly upon Palestine Jews, the Yishuv, was great, giving rise

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3. See Marlowe (i).
4. Mandate for Palestine, Article 6.
5. Quoted Yigal Allon The Making of Israel's Army (London, 1970) p 15.

to revolutionary fervour of an unusual kind, something stronger and wider than any rebellion against the apparatus of a state. The fervour expressed Jewish indignation against the helplessness and statelessness of the Jews, endured since the Romans crushed Bar Cochba's rebellion in AD 140, a situation that Zionists believed could not on any account be allowed to endure any longer if the survivors of Nazi death camps were to be saved and if Jews were to protect themselves from further outrages. It was a global revolution, although the focus of Zionist ambition was the land of Palestine.

In 1942 the Zionist Congress resolved to strive for unlimited immigration, unrestricted land purchases from Arabs, and a Jewish State,[6] thus going much further than a mere rejection of the White Paper. More and more Jews were beginning to feel that they should if necessary resort to force, although the Jewish Agency tried desperately to hold the door open for peaceful negotiations with the British. Prominent UK politicians favoured the Zionist cause, including Mr Winston Churchill, the likely leader of any post-war Conservative Administration. If the Socialists gained power, their sympathy, too, seemed assured. At their 1944 Conference the Labour Party voted to 'let Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority'.[7] There was thus good justification for Zionist leaders' hopes that a satisfactory settlement would be negotiated after the war. Nevertheless the revolutionary forces within Zionism continued to mount. Foremost within these forces were the Revisionists.

Quite early in the Jewish resettlement of Palestine there arose within Zionist ranks a right wing party that demanded revision of the Mandate to include Transjordon in the scope of the National Home. Under their leader, Vladimir Jabotinsky, the 'Revisionists', as the party was called, acted, at least, as a kind of 'ginger group' within Zionism and, at most, as a revolutionary force seeking to impose its authority over the Yishuv. In the second capacity the Revisionists set up the 'New Zionist Organisation' which challenged the World Zionist

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6. At the Biltmore Hotel in New York, John Marlowe (ii) The Seat of Pilate. (London, 1959), p 174.

7. Quoted Christopher Sykes, Cross Roads to Israel (London, 1965), p 311.

Organisation for leadership of international Zionism. During the 1930s revisionists penetrated Haganah, eventually sponsoring a break-away 'Haganah 'B'' from which was created the Irgun Zwai Leumi, the National Military Organisation, or 'Irgun' for short. Revisionist youth was organised into a semi-sports club 'on the Fascist model',[8] known as Brith Trumpeldor or Betar. Branches of the adult and junior wings of Revisionism were formed amongst Jewish communities in America, South Africa and Europe. This division within Zionism was to exert a profound influence on events leading up to the creation of the state of Israel.

This chapter attempts to assess the role of Zionist propaganda, both Official and Revisionist, in the period leading up to the establishment of modern Israel, and also considers British counter-measures.

The Post-War Situation

In the last full year of the second world war Mr Churchill's War Cabinet attempted to find a solution to the Palestine problem. In January 1944 they agreed in principle a scheme of partition. However by 20 May, when the Army Council Secretariat briefed the Secretary of State for War in these clear terms, the scheme was already doomed:

> In view of the difficulties attendant on any partition scheme, it may be wondered why the project has been revived. The reason briefly is that it is now quite clear that no modus vivendi between Arabs and Jews will ever be reached; that the British Government are irrevocably committed to the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine; and, this being so, the rights of the Arabs must be preserved so far as possible. The only possible solution is Partition. 9

Sadly, the brief went on to explain that the Foreign Secretary, who had reserved judgement in January, had since expressed fears of 'enduring disturbances in an area where internal tranquility is of the utmost

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8. Marlowe (i), p 136.

9. Army Council Secretariat Brief for Secretary of State for War, 20 May 1944 (WP (44) 253) referring to Plan of Partition P (M) (43) 14. PRO File 0176/727 (Palestine Policy), WO 32-10260.

strategical importance'.[10] The 'only possible solution' was shelved. We may regret, with the benefit of hindsight, that the course proposed was not adopted. British prestige and power were in 1944 at their height, Zionist leaders were still anxious to co-operate, Palestine Arab leaders, having backed the Germans, were discredited. If the 1944 partition scheme was the only solution, 1944-1946 was also perhaps the last period when Britain could have imposed that or any other scheme.

The war against Germany ended in May 1945. A July election brought the Labour Party to power in Britain, raising in Jewish Palestine high hopes that Labour Party resolutions would be translated into Government policy. This was not to be the case. Confronted with the realities and responsibilities of office, Mr Attlee's Cabinet gave the Palestine problem a low priority, accepting Foreign Office and Chiefs of Staff advice which continued to set the maintenance of Britain's strategic interests in the Near and Middle East high above any obligation to support Zionist ambitions. The strategic interests which one year earlier had hinged upon the conduct of the war against the Axis powers were now concerned with possible Soviet threats to the Middle East. Russia continued to occupy Iranian Azerbaijan, and threatened Greece and Turkey. New regimes in Syria and Iraq might be vulnerable to Soviet pressure unless supported by a British presence close at hand. Although British defence planners saw Egypt as their future main base in the region, they deemed it essential to hold a forward base in Palestine.

In addition to this perceived need to retain naval, military and air force facilities in Palestine, which might not have been

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10. The Colonian Secretary, Colonel Oliver Stanley, had put forward a scheme envisaging a Jewish state incorporating Haifa, Acre Bay, the Plain of Esdraelon, Tiberias, Beisan, and the coastal Plain stretching south from Haifa as far as Qastina, roughly 20 km deep, including Tel Aviv and Jaffa. The Arab State would have included the Huleh, Northern Galillee, Nazareth and Acre, Samaria, with Tulkarm, Jenin, Nablus and Jericho and, in the South, Hebron, Beersheba, Gaza and the Negev north of Beersheba. The southern Negev would have been a 'reserved zone' and the central area around Jerusalem, including the Holy Places of that City and Bethlehem, Ramallah and Lydda, would have belonged to a separate multi-national 'Jerusalem State' still administered by the Mandatory. The plan provided for possible mergers between the northern Arab territory with Syria, and the southern, with Transjordan. The southern Negev was apparently intended for the Jews once Arab opinion had been mollified. Only 7000 Jews lived in areas allotted to Arabs, while in their own State the Jews would have been a majority. See PRO Report 20 Dec 1943 CAB119/147 and War Cabinet Paper (45) 306, Memorandum by Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16 May 1945, CAB66/65.

incompatible with Jewish aspirations, the British Government was concerned to preserve its wider interests in the Middle East, particularly the free flow of oil and rights to overfly Arab territory in order to maintain garrisons further east. On 27 March 1945 the Post-Hostilities Planning Staff had written:

> It is therefore of cardinal importance that the policy of His Majesty's Government towards the Middle East should aim at creating a friendly and contented Arab world, by eliminating every possible cause for dispute. 11

This aim was incompatible with Zionist hopes. If Britain was to regard Arab goodwill as all-important, then she could do little to ease the White Paper restrictions on Jewish immigration, and she could do nothing that might point in the direction of Jewish statehood. The new Labour Government revived the hope that, miraculously, some modus vivendi between Arabs and Jews could after all be reached, and their attitude toward Britain's commitment to establish a National Home was ambiguous. The policy so far as the Jews were concerned was not to have a policy. This satisfied the majority Arab population of Palestine but was obviously objectionable to the Yishuv and world Jewry.

On 24 August 1945 Sir John Shaw, Chief Secretary for Palestine and Senior official on the staff of the High Commissioner in Jerusalem, wrote a despatch to the Colonial Secretary. After giving his assessment of the internal security situation as 'not only gloomy as to the present, but depressing as to the future', Shaw wrote:

> If I am correct in believing that the Yishuv is being psychologically prepared for what will be in effect armed rebellion, it must be admitted that material preparations do not seem to lag behind. (He assesses the Jewish terrorist potential) ... The picture is a sombre one. The young Jewish extremists, the product of a vicious education system, know neither toleration nor compromise; they regard themselves as morally justified in violence directed against any individual or institution that impedes the complete fulfilment of their demands. 12

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11. PRO document PHP (45) 10(o) (Final), Annex to COS (45) 90th Meeting 6 April 1945, CAB 79/31.

12. PRO Letter, Chief Secretary for Palestine to Colonial Secretary, 24 August 1945, File 75156/75 'Palestine Annex - internal security Palestine 1945', CO 733/456 Part I.

The Mandatory Power

British policy on Palestine was agreed in Cabinet and transmitted through the Offices of State concerned with its implementation. Principal among these were the Colonial Office and the War Office, which issued directives and instructions respectively to the High Commissioner and the General Officer Commanding British Troops in Palestine and Transjordan who had their offices in Jerusalem and who were jointly responsible for security matters. The Civil Administration controlled the Palestine Police, a powerful force which had managed the enforcement of law and order virtually single-handed throughout the war.

The Police Force was made up of British, Jewish and Arab personnel. UK members served at all grades, unlike many Colonial Forces where they served only as officers. Jews and Arabs in the force were exposed to community pressures, and were reliable only in so far as their duties did not conflict too harshly with native loyalties. Mr Efraim Dekel, Haganah's one-time Chief of Intelligence, has described how 'the greatest contributions to the Haganah security and intelligence forces were made by Jewish policemen and government employees who were also members of Haganah. They carried out their Haganah duties from a realisation of their patriotic duty and without any need of special encouragement or special orders. Their police or government jobs were their field of duty within the Haganah, to which they had sworn loyalty'.[13] Sometimes, because of their senior rank in the government service, Jewish spies were deliberately excluded from Haganah membership, thus lessening the risks of their being uncovered. Dekel makes it clear that all Jews were expected to put loyalty to the Jewish cause above personal or other considerations. Against those who 'regarded their government service as a personal career more important to them than the needs of the people ... threats often had to be used'.[14] During

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13. Efraim Dekel SHAI: The Exploits of Hagana Intelligence (New York, 1959), p 15. (Without disrespect to Mr Dekel, the reader has to be warned not to place undue reliance upon the account of an intelligence chief. Such individuals never really retire, and much that is written in this book appears designed to conceal the truth, rather than reveal it.)

14. Dekel, pp 15-16.

pre-war years, when the security threat was mainly Arab, the Police had turned their attention in that direction. Far more British officers spoke Arabic than Hebrew.[15] The mounting Jewish tension had not caused a corresponding change in police attitudes. No doubt the Jewish tendency to isolate themselves from the administration dissuaded policemen from learning their language, with the inevitable (and for the Jews, desirable) result that police intelligence gathering within the Yishuv was hampered.

The determination of the Palestine Police to maintain law and order single-handed was admirable, and had it been possible successfully to sustain this policy in the post-war years no cause for criticism would arise. In the face of a deteriorating situation, however, the Force tended to cling to the principle long after the reality had faded, and this gave rise to two areas of difficulty. In an attempt to extend police capability into the military field, the Force set up the 'Police Mobile Force' equipped with armoured cars, thus diverting effort from the essential police tasks of detection, arrests and conviction towards a para-military role, and, in mistaken confidence that they could handle security problems that soon became immense, the Police called for military assistance only for specific tasks, instead of involving the Army in a properly co-ordinated joint counter-insurgency campaign.

Throughout most of the post-war Mandatory period the British Army in Palestine consisted of two divisions and one independent brigade. The divisions shared the territory by dividing it into North and South Sectors, leaving the area containing Jerusalem to the brigade. One of the divisions, the 6th Airborne, was originally sent to Palestine to be the Middle East Imperial Strategic Reserve.[16]

As well as the two divisions and the independent brigade, many base troops were situated in Palestine to support the strategic interests that gave the country so much importance in the eyes of the British Chiefs of Staff. Additionally the Royal Navy had an installation in Haifa and the Royal Air Force had stations up and down the country.

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15. 21.3% spoke Arabic and 3.4% spoke Hebrew. PRO Palestine Police Annual Administrative Report 1946, Jerusalem, 1947, p 6. CO 814/40.

16. The writer served in this Division throughout its tour in Palestine 1945-48.

The concentration of military in so small a land was high. However, because most were there for reasons unconnected with internal security, the over-abundance of camps and depots was anything but an asset in countering insurgency. Administrative units provided tempting targets for saboteurs or raiders and imposed additional burdens on the units committed to keeping the peace. Moreover, the concentration of installations was valuable to Zionist propaganda, since it swelled the figures that could be counted as 'oppressors' and, in the glorification of deeds, it increased the odds against which the heroes had struggled.

In the aftermath of great world wars victorious armies are apt to fall apart as the cause which inspired unity disappears. The British Army in 1945 was remarkably resilient to this tendency but nevertheless the competing requirements of early demobilisation of veterans and large, continuing overseas commitments created difficult problems. Experienced officers and soldiers were lost at a pace that made replacement difficult. Morale, though high, depended rather heavily upon prospects of early 'demob'. One officer has recalled how his regiment 'settled down to a curious routine in which the new skills of Internal Security operations were combined with both the tough, rather slap-happy wartime attitude to soldiering and the beginnings of the restoration of pre-war peacetime Regimental life. More time was spent on training and sport than on operations'.[17]

The army was not prepared for counter-insurgency, either psychologically or by training. All ranks saw the purpose of an army solely in terms of fighting wars. A long pre-war experience of imperial policing had been all but extinguished by five years of conflict. For those who did remember it, the imperial experience was in any case of limited usefulness. It related to two eventualities, riots in towns and counter-guerrilla action in the countryside. In the urban situation the army was prepared to move in if police could not cope with rising violence, deal sharply with the unruly, and restore the situation so that police could resume control. In the rural setting the army would be conducting straightforward albeit limited military operations. The

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17. Colin Mitchell, Having Been a Soldier (London, 1962), p 55.

concept that developed in the 1950s of prolonged joint police and army counter-insurgency operations was unknown in 1945. Consequently the readiness of the Palestine Police to expand its operations into the military sphere, thus excluding the troops from close involvement in countering insurgency, went for too long unchallenged by the Army in Palestine.

In the same way that rebellion flourishes when led by an alternative regime which directs a combined political, military and psychological onslaught, so successful counter-insurgency policies need similar ingredients. The Palestine Government of 1945 possessed strength only in one of these compartments - the police and military. Politically it waited for positive guidance from London, and none came. In the psychological field it was already in deep trouble, as a result of Zionist war-time propaganda against the White Paper. The Public Information Office was a branch of the Jerusalem Secretariat, with a staff in 1945 of over one hundred. Outstations existed in Lydda and Haifa. Very little could, however, be achieved while London advised that 'until HMG makes a new declaration of policy with regard to Palestine, it is undesirable that our publicity should attempt to cover future developments'.[18] Furthermore the staff and budget were cut at the end of hostilities. In London the Ministry of Information was in April 1946 replaced by the Central Office of Information, a non-ministerial, non-policy making service agency.[19] The war-time apparatus for government propaganda virtually ceased to exist and it would seem from subsequent events that the will-to-ignorance on this subject, which had dominated official attitudes between the wars, returned with renewed force.

Zionist Resources and Strategy

A device often useful to revolutionaries is the 'alternative government'. This attempts, usually from some secret hideaway, to

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18. PRO Overseas Planning Committee - Plan of Propaganda for Palestine, 2nd Revision of Aims and Objectives, paper No 576A, 1 June 1945. File 75893: Publicity 1945. CO 733/465.

19. See 'Post-war activities of the Ministry of Information, 1945-46' in PRO Inf 1/943.

present itself as a better focus for the people's loyalty, obedience and confidence than the legitimate administration. In proportion to the alternative regime's success in winning loyalty, obedience and confidence, the legitimate government forfeits these advantages. If this process goes too far, 'legitimacy' itself changes sides, and with it the de facto moral right to govern. Under the terms of the 1922 Mandate the Yishuv was presented with what to all intents and purposes was the apparatus of alternative government, to be recognised and accepted by the Mandatory, in the form of the Jewish Agency. From the earliest days the Yishuv was educated to regard the Agency as its sole protector, advocate and guide. Loyalty to the spirit of the League of Nations Mandate, implying a measure of respect for and understanding of the Palestine Administration, was discouraged amongst rank and file Jews. Jewish leaders appreciated the value of being 'above ground', and refrained from any direct challenge to the Mandatory Authority's right to govern. Nevertheless, the structure of embryo statehood was one of Zionism's most valuable assets.

The Jewish Agency's military organisation, Haganah, had originally been a defensive force to protect settlements against Arab attack. Havlagah, self-restraint, was the guiding principle. During the Arab Rebellion of 1937-39 that principle gradually gave way before the need to deprive the Arabs of the initiative, a need which was fulfilled by offensive patrolling against Arab terrorists, their bases and supplies. The British Captain Orde Wingate was influential in this conversion. In 1941, with British approval, Haganah volunteers formed an independent striking force consisting of nine companies regularly mobilized for action. This unit was known as the Palmach (the initials of the Hebrew words for 'striking companies') and was designed to strengthen the defence of Palestine against any Axis attack and to conduct offensive operations as required.[20] The Allies made excellent use of two Palmach companies in the invasion of Syria and Lebanon, and the Palmach made excellent use of the specialist training and experience offered. The division of Haganah into two wings, the large, regionally organised local defence organisation, and the

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20. Allon, pp 16-17.

relatively small, highly trained, better armed, Palmach, continued in the post-war years, until with independence both found their places in the Army of Israel. The closely-knit, disciplined and militant Yishuv was by 1945 an embryo state, with its own 'government' and 'army'. By its willingness to tolerate, and even encourage, Hagana and other 'illegal' organisations in time of war, the Palestine Administration made its post-war task extremely difficult, not simply because of the training and material assistance provided to these groups, but because of the transfer of legitimacy involved. It was as unconvincing to tell Jewish audiences after May 1945 that Hagana and Irgun had always been illegal as it would have been to tell Britons that the Home Guard had never been officially authorised.

The events in Palestine between Autumn 1945 and the British departure in 1948 are often depicted as a 'war of national liberation' or an 'anti-colonial struggle'. In fact the Zionist endeavour was more complicated than either expression suggests, and the continued use of such labels says more for the lasting effect of propaganda than for truth. The Jews wanted their own state in as large a part of Palestine as they could get and, knowing perfectly well that the Arabs would never accept this arrangement unless forced to, they needed armed protection before, during and after the birth of their National Home. Such protection might be provided, in the event of a negotiated settlement within the terms of the Mandate, by the Mandatory Power. If on the other hand it turned out that the only way to establish the National Home was by forcing Britain to relinquish the Mandate, it would hardly be likely that the departing British soldiers would fight the Arabs on the Jews' behalf. Thus any such policy of coercion would need fine timing between on the one hand the coercion, and on the other, a necessary build-up of Jewish military capability. Only by immigration, arms purchase or manufacture, training and discipline, could the Yishuv achieve superiority over whatever forces the Arabs might eventually range against them. Lacking these essentials a successful struggle against the British might swiftly be followed by annihilation by the Arabs. This was a problem much more subtle than any straightforward war to eject a colonial regime. The Zionist aim in 1945 was to set up a new state in the chosen territory against the wishes of the two-thirds majority Arab population. To do so, the protection of the Mandatory

was necessary until such time as Jewish strength was sufficient for self-defence, and at that moment the Mandate had either to be drastically modified or be ended.

Professor Yigal Allon has explained the various courses considered by the Jewish leaders. The possibility of open warfare was ruled out immediately, as was 'the strategy of classical guerrilla warfare'.[21] No Jewish leader imagined that half a million Jews could win a military victory over Britain. Instead, they sought a strategy aimed at 'forcing the problem on all parties concerned, and forcing them to seek a positive solution ... The struggle was, of course, a means, not an end; it was intended to prepare the ground for Zionist political activity in London, in other capitals, and in the United Nations, directed and co-ordinated by the Political Department of the World Zionist Executive in Jerusalem'.[22] Three alternatives were considered '(a) at one extreme, terrorist tactics, directed without discrimination against all British targets and personnel; (b) at the other extreme, a 'limited' struggle, which renounced military action, and confined itself exclusively to bringing in illegal immigrants, establishing new settlements in prohibited areas, and holding mass demonstrations; and (c) the 'middle way' in fact adopted: this rejected personal terrorism, both on moral and practical grounds (it was considered immoral because it was against the Jewish ethical code, with its respect for human life, and impractical because it could provoke counter-terrorism), and accepted the second alternative - illegal immigration, new settlements in prohibited areas, and mass demonstrations - as the best way of conducting the struggle, supplemented however by direct military action based on guerrilla tactics'.[23]

This chosen strategy of 'Constructive Warfare' picked a difficult course between the two Zionist needs of statehood and security. Immigration, besides being vital as a means of resettling Europe's destitute Jews, would slowly bring the Jews in Palestine to numerical parity and then to superiority over the Palestinian Arabs. For all that the Mandatory Administration and security forces opposed illegal immigration and limited it so far as they were able, their presence in

21. Allon, p 23.

22. Allon, p 25.

23. Allon, pp 23-24.

the country and their apparent opposition to Zionist policy could be relied upon to sooth Arab fears and prevent violence from that potentially dangerous quarter. For similar reasons the setting up of new settlements in prohibited places was unlikely to attract Arab reaction. These settlements would extend the defensible perimeter of promised land, and were tactically sited. Mass demonstrations would bring large sections of the Jewish community into angry confrontation and possible conflict with British police and military, consolidating the effects of preliminary propaganda, hardening attitudes, cementing discipline and unity, and justifying in Jewish eyes whatever violent acts Haganah might perpetrate in support of the chosen strategy. Haganah's role would meanwhile strengthen and test the embryo army. Thus, by a single policy, Zionism hoped to build up its defences against whatever Arab military challenge might later emerge, exert controlled pressure against the Mandatory Power in a manner calculated not only to permit concurrent political dialogue but also to bring about political change at the moment, and not before, that the Nation could stand on its own feet, and impress friends and neutrals by demonstrations of disciplined military capability and unbreakable National will.

'Constructive Warfare' depended upon a mixture of politics, controlled para-military violence or threat of violence, and propaganda. Before the Second World War the main thrust of Zionist persuasion had been towards Britain, the Mandatory Power. This had rested upon rational argument, and the means chosen were personal contacts at Cabinet level, lobbying, and pressure groups. Few appeals were made through the news media at the general public. Appreciating, no doubt, the likely shift of world power brought about by the war, the Zionists during the conflict turned their attention increasingly towards the United States of America. Rational argument was dropped in favour of emotional appeals backed up by a pretense at rationality, and, although lobbying played an important part, the main effort was a propaganda campaign aimed through all available media at the public. The offensive was inspired by the Jewish Agency's political department, which also controlled propaganda themes and messages in Palestine. The organisational framework necessary for propaganda operations in the US and elsewhere overseas already existed in the form of the World Zionist Organisation. Committed activitists in every main

centre of population worked to mobilise Jews of the Diaspora.[24] Gifted and industrious, and often occupying key positions in the fields of mass communications and entertainment, such talent armed Zionism with what was to prove to be overwhelming propaganda strength.

At home the Jewish Agency's Political Department, jointly with Haganah, published the newspaper Eshnab (Window). Commenting upon the Palestine news media on 25 September 1943 an official in the Mandatory Administration had written: 'Eshnab is the most efficiently edited and through its apparent judiciousness is the most insidious of the three (underground publications).'[25] The views expressed in Eshnab were given an international audience through the two Jewish Agency sponsored press services, Palcor, and the Palestine Telegraphic Agency.[26] Both the Palestine Post, the English daily, and the Palestine Tribune, an English weekly, were Zionist in editorial outlook, as were nearly all the 18 Hebrew weeklies and 11 Hebrew dailies. The British Embassy in Cairo brought to the Foreign Office's attention the fact that every British daily but one employed Jewish correspondents in Palestine, who tended to 'play down the degree of tension prevailing due to terrorism'.[27] On 9 March 1945 an illegal radio transmitter began short but regular broadcasts in English, Hebrew and Arabic.[28] It called itself 'The Voice of Israel', or Kol Israel, and like Eshnab it was really another Jewish Agency outlet. Because, however, both the act of unlicenced broadcasting and much of what was said contravened the law, the transmitter had to be attributed to the illegal Haganah rather than the officially recognised Agency. These outlets could be aimed, directly or indirectly, at the Yishuv and Jewish communities overseas ('friends'),

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24. Diaspora, dispersion, used collectively for the dispersed Jews after the Babylonian captivity, and also in the apostalic age for the Jews living outside Palestine; now, for Jews outside Isreal. (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, New Edition, 1975.)

25. Letter from Mr Robert Scott, Chief Secretary's Office, to Mr Boyd, Colonial Office, dated 25 September 1943. PRO File 75969/4 Illegal Organisations - Illegal News sheets 1943-44. CO 733/466.

26. Op cit.

27. Letter, Egyptian Department, British Embassy Cairo, to Foreign Office, 4 January 1945. PRO File E 4622. FO 371/45376.

28. Dekel devotes a chapter to Kol Israel.

at 'neutral' audiences in America and Europe as well as Palestinian Arabs, and at the 'enemy', British administrators, police and military.

During the early course of the World War the extremists of Zionism, the Revisionists and their para-military Irgun Zwai Leumi, had lost influence in Palestine. In the United States they were still relatively strong, through branches of the New Zionist Organisation and Betar. In 1939 the Irgun, like Haganah, had agreed to throw its weight behind the Allied war effort. Some Irgun members carried out missions behind enemy lines. One of these operations cost the life of the group's leader, David Raziel. This loss undermined Irgun morale, which was already weakened by years of inaction. Membership dropped and the outlook for the group was bleak. Any hope of revival rested upon positive leadership and headstrong action. The arrival in Palestine in 1942 of Mr Menachem Begin, a Polish refugee, provided both.

Begin had commanded Betar in Poland until imprisoned by the invading Russians in 1939, a fate which put an end to a fantastic but nevertheless serious Revisionist plot to arm and train the Polish Betar youth for a military invasion of Palestine.[29] Begin's personality was marked by a fierce determination never to entertain any argument or belief contrary to his own. He was a fanatic. Yet within its ideological confines his intellect was brilliant. This and his compelling personality, utter dedication to his cause, and unyielding determination fitted him for revolutionary leadership. Command of the Irgun passed into his hands late in 1943 at the request of Yaakov Meridor, who had been struggling to keep the group together since Raziel's death. Begin severed Irgun's overt ties with the Revisionists, believing that the political movement had lost its vigour since the death in 1940 of its founder, Vladimir Jabotinsky. Thereafter, Begin was a political as well as a military leader[30], and the Revisionist Movement was slowly taken over as an international 'front' organisation for the Irgun.

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29. J Bowyer Bell (i), On Revolt, Strategies of National Liberation, (Harvard, 1976), p 39.

30. Samuel Katz, Days of Fire, (London, 1968), p 83: 'Irgun was to be its own political organisation, using force as occasion required'.

Begin faced a dilemma. Either he must revitalise the Irgun or the process of disintegration that began after Raziel's death would soon progress beyond recovery. Violent extremists have no group purpose other than extreme violence. In Begin's words, 'We fight, therefore we are'.[31] Yet, with World War II still at its height and Zionist hopes still pinned to a British Government that might be sympathetic to their aims after the war, any unilateral action by Irgun would certainly be opposed by the Jewish Agency. Begin resolved his problem in the only way his personality permitted. Whatever else might suffer, the Irgun had to be kept alive. He decided to appeal over the heads of the official Zionist organisations directly to the Yishuv and then to begin a revolt intended to 'militarise' the Palestine situation. The revolt was proclaimed during January 1944 and armed attacks took place soon after. In all respects but one, Irgun's go-it-alone strategy was a disaster.

Attacks were made against police stations and similar targets and many were successful. The propaganda offensive, carried out by the 'Revolutionary Propaganda Force' had rather less success. The Yishuv paid more heed to the numerous Jewish Agency and Haganah outlets than to the Irgun wall-newspaper Herut (Freedom). The Jewish Agency attempted to persuade Irgun to cease their attacks. When these warnings went unheeded they ordered Haganah to suppress the 'dissidents' by all means short of bloodshed or denouncing them to the Mandatory authorities.

At first, not much action was taken. Then, in rather the same way that the Irgun offensive had upset the Jewish Agency's strategy, yet another group, acting independently both of the Agency and of Irgun, committed a crime that had a similar upsetting effect on the Irgun's campaign. In Cairo, two members of the breakaway 'Stern' group murdered the British Minister, Lord Moyne. Responsible opinion everywhere was outraged. The Jewish Agency removed the second of the two restraints on Haganah action and information was passed to the Palestine Police that enabled them to arrest scores of Irgun and Stern members.[32] The go-it-alone war ended in defeat.

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31. Menachem Begin, The Revolt, (Log Angeles, 1948) p 46.

32. For an Irgun viewpoint of this period, see Katz, pp 83-87.

In his book, Menachem Begin claims credit for preventing a Jewish civil war by refusing to allow his men to fight back against Haganah.[33] Considering that the risk of civil war arose entirely out of his deliberate defiance of the Zionist Leadership, this claim is spurious. What he could fairly claim was that, having resurrected the Irgun by committing it to a fight, he then saved it from total extinction by refusing battle with Haganah. When the Jewish Agency called off 'the Season' as the anti-dissident campaign was called, the Irgun framework was still intact, with improved morale, enjoying a measure of respect in the Yishuv, and experienced in the art of surviving 'underground'. This was the sole achievement of the otherwise disastrous 1944 campaign: for Begin, it was enough. Henceforth the 'alternative government' of the Jewish Agency would be challenged by an alternative 'alternative government', the Irgun.

By the autumn of 1945 the Jewish Agency and Haganah leaders had evolved their 'Constructive Warfare' strategy. They were naturally anxious to avoid seeing this strategy undermined by independent action by the 'dissidents', Irgun and Stern. Negotiations began for a merger of Irgun into Haganah, a course resisted by Begin. 'What will be the result?' he asked the Haganah representative, 'a new split after unification? What do we want all these complications for? Let us rather accept the dictates of reality. The Haganah has just entered on the fight. We have been waging it for a long time. Let us therefore, in spite of all that has happened in the past, establish a united front'.[34] No doubt believing this solution to be the best they were likely to get, the Zionist leaders accepted. The Tenuat Hameri (United Resistance Movement) came into existence, placing the Irgun and Stern groups under Haganah's operational control, but reserving to Begin the right to order raids on arms stores on his own initiative. Although the alliance lessened the dangers of factional strife within the Yishuv and strengthened the para-military forces nominally obedient to the Agency, it effectively destroyed all chance of success for the chosen strategy of 'Constructive Warfare'.

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33. Begin, pp 133-153; Katz, pp 86-87; Bowyer Bell (i), p 51.
34. Begin, p 184.

Zionist Pre-Propaganda and Revolutionary Propaganda Assumptions

Soon after Britain published the White Paper in 1939 the Zionist Movement began a propaganda campaign to discredit it. The shocking revelations of Hitler's genocide made the British immigration policy seem doubly obnoxious, while the influence of Revisionism tended to convert the anti-White Paper crusade into a much wider campaign of vilification and hate. The villain of the piece was Britain, first as the author of the White Paper, but later on as the perpetrator of numerous evils, real or imagined. Britain's immigration policy was presented by Zionist propaganda as being a betrayal of pledges contained in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which support for a Jewish National Home in Palestine had originally been expressed, and also of Britain's obligations under the terms of the 1922 Mandate. Neither allegation stood close inspection, since both documents were written in a manner that left them free to be interpretated in favour of either Jews or Arabs. Effective propaganda does not, however, allow close inspection of any argument or fact unfavourable to the conclusion desired, and there was sufficient 'positive' material in these documents to convince susceptible audiences. Thus Britain was shown to be acting improperly against Jewish vital interests. As such, she became identified as the enemy. Once this relationship had been established it was a short step to encourage hatred which in turn justifies murder. This wartime pre-propaganda[35] did not, however, seek to impel its audience into action, only to prepare them for this at a later time.

How effectively the vilification campaign was conducted can be seen from a brief study of one propaganda exercise which occurred in 1940. The Palestine Administration had requisitioned a ship called La Patria to take unauthorised immigrants who had just reached Haifa to Mauritius, where they were to live for the duration of the war. The Agency decided to cripple La Patria before she left Haifa port, thus embarrassing the authorities and possibly preventing the wretched would-be immigrants from being taken away. Haganah was therefore ordered to undertake the mission and the plan adopted involved

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35. See p 18.

disabling the ship's engines by an explosion. The operation miscarried. The charge was too powerful and inexpertly positioned, so that it tore a hole in the ship's side beneath the water-line. La Patria heeled over and sank in just over an hour. 202 refugees and 50 crew and police perished in the explosion or by drowning.[36]

Hasty improvisation was called for; the Jewish Agency lacked neither imagination nor audacity. After a rapid check to confirm that the saboteurs had evaded detection, the Agency declared that the sinking of the ship was an act of mass-protest by its unwilling passengers, an attempt, in part successful, at mass suicide. The event was presented to world opinion as an heroic 'propaganda of the deed'. Once this story was established in people's minds it was too popular to be shaken by facts showing it to be untrue.
Mr James Callaghan has said in recent times that 'a lie can be half way round the world before truth has got its boots on'.[37] The first account to be published is often believed longest. Truth, hobbling up from behind, is easily dismissed as an official 'cover up', if it is listened to at all. In this case truth got one boot on two months after the tragedy, when the Commission of Inquiry established beyond doubt that the explosion had been the work of a group operating from the shore. As the culprits were unknown, suspicion fell upon extremists such as Irgun or Stern. This discovery should at least have put an end to the 'suicide' story, yet as late as 1949 Arthur Koestler was still promoting it.[38] Truth's second boot was finally laced on in 1960 'when the Jerusalem Post disclosed the real instigators'.[39] By the nature of their cover-up, the Jewish Agency turned their bungled plot into a masterly example of 'disinformation'.[40]

The theme of opposition to the White Paper was, of course, backed up by the reality of the terrible plight of Jews in German-occupied

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36. For a first hand account of the placing of the charge, see M M Mardor Strictly Illegal, (London, 1964), pp 56-76. Another account appears in Jon and David Kimche, The Secret Roads, (London, 1954), pp 53-54.

37. Mr Callaghan, Prime Minister, speaking in the House of Commons 1 November 1976. Hansard Vol 918, No 176, Colm 976.

38. See Arthur Koestler, Promise and Fulfilment, (London, 1949).

39. See Sykes, pp 267-271. Jon and David Kimche also disclosed the truth.

40. See p 22.

Europe. The general unwillingness of 'neutrals' to accept the survivors into their own societies made these audiences particularly receptive of Zionist propaganda that argued for resettlement in Palestine. Thus by the Autumn of 1945 many free world audiences had been conditioned to accept uncritically Jewish claims for free immigration into Palestine on humanitarian grounds and to regard British obstruction of this ambition as cruel and unjust. Jews, particularly the Yishuv, already half identified Britain as the enemy, and felt justified in any action to assist immigration or otherwise advance the Zionist cause. Those who had been subjected to Revisionist pre-propaganda had reached a condition in which murder was easily justified. It was therefore simple to switch from pre to revolutionary propaganda, and to advance from assumptions which the pre-propaganda had made credible.

Official Zionist revolutionary or 'constructive warfare' propaganda advanced from three main assumptions; that the Jews had an historical, legal and moral right to establish a National Home in Palestine, that these same considerations, reinforced by events in Hitler's Europe, justified unlimited immigration and land purchase, and that the Yishuv, having the right to survive, must therefore have the right to defend itself. These assumptions were accompanied by one basic denial. Arab claims to Palestinian territory were illusory and alleged Arab opposition to Jewish settlement was a British invention. Thus in October 1945 Ben Gurion stated: 'We repudiate that there is friction between ourselves and the Arab Middle East ... We regard our constructive undertaking as integrated with the historical needs of this part of the world. We are fulfilling a historic mission in developing this region'.[41] This line was important when played back to 'neutral' audiences, as a means of discrediting the argument that full acceptance of Zionist demands would almost certainly lead to conflict between the Jews and Arabs, and that caution was needed if a peaceful solution was to be found. The overall aim was to prove to the world, including British public opinion, that injustice must give way to righteousness, so that the world would persuade the British Government to change its policies or quit.

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41. Palcor News Agency, Bulletin, 29 November 1945. PRO File 75156/151A, 1945, Pt II, Item 104. CO 733/456.

The assumptions behind the Irgun's revolutionary propaganda were far bolder. The Jewish right to Palestine was historical and moral only, not legal. Legal rights arising from British promises and the small print of the 1922 Mandate made supplicants of the Jews and, by the same legal process, denied their full and unfettered claims to the whole territory which by Revisionist insistence included Transjordan. By the same reasoning, Britain had no right whatsoever to administer Palestine, or to station troops there, let alone to obstruct the historically inevitable and morally sound processes of immigration, settlement, defence and statehood. Thus the killing of British policemen and soldiers was a courageous act of liberation while the arrest of extremists was an illegal and hideous act of oppression. Most hideous of all was the execution of Irgun members convicted of capital offences. The Arabs were ignored in Irgun propaganda, their claims being extinguished by historical and moral forces. If Arabs resisted, the psychological weapon of terror would be turned against them. The essential differences between orthodox Zionist and Irgun propaganda assumptions, therefore, lay in the area of legitimacy. The Jewish Agency could pursue most of their lines while remaining 'above ground', since their game was played within the rules of legitimacy provided under the Mandate. The Irgun's lines rejected the Mandate and the legitimacy of any authority within Palestine other than Jewish authority: they had to be pursued 'underground'. Begin wanted the Agency hierarchy to go underground and embrace the Irgun's philosophy. 'We should be prepared at any moment to accept the discipline of Ben Gurion', he stated, 'If he would take the lead in the struggle for national liberation ... The orders of a Ben Gurion sitting in Jerusalem and in effect recognising the White Paper, we would not carry out. But we would gladly carry out the instructions of a Ben Gurion sitting, say in Deganiah calling for a revolt against the regime of the oppressor'.[42]

Although the assumptions of the two purveyors of propaganda overlapped, the areas of difference were important. 'Constructive Warfare' was essentially a persuasive strategy, aimed at British opinion as well as the outside world, and designed to change Government

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42. Begin, pp 149-150.

policy by a process of political arm-twisting. There was a strong revolutionary thread running through it, but Zionist leaders did not seek a showdown, not at least for the present. As Allon put it: 'it was hoped, in short, to prove to Britain and the rest of the world, that an unjust and unworkable policy (the White Paper) may cease to be a policy at all; and thereby to induce Britain to change it for a better one - or, alternatively, for a worse one, in which case the Jews would receive fresh impetus to continue the struggle for a solution'.[43] Some of the cruder forms of pre-propaganda had already blurred the picture the Agency wished to paint, by the identification of Britain as an enemy, and by the encouragement of hate. These perceptions might be fine for a full-blown revolution, but this was not what the official leaders had in mind in 1945.

They were of course precisely what the Irgun and the Stern Group needed to support their strategies. Their propaganda and very soon their actions intensified these themes. This activity would in time rob 'Constructive Warfare' of any chance of appealing to the British public, whose reactions to slander and murder were exactly the opposite of what the Jewish Agency was hoping to achieve by relatively non-violent persuasion. The strategy selected by the Jewish Agency and Haganah was extremely sophisticated and delicate and could not succeed if pushed and pulled by extremists within the United Resistance. With hindsight it can be said that the day when the Agency called off 'the Season' without having obliterated the alternative 'alternative government', it lost control of events. As is frequently the case in a volatile situation, the more extreme elements thereafter called the tune.

Propaganda washes minds but leaves little visible evidence in the form of documents and statements that chart the course of political activity, or of damage and casualties that are the hallmark of military action. Therefore it is often impossible to say with any degree of certainty what the effects of propaganda have been. The fact that few people like to admit that they may have been influenced by propaganda compounds this difficulty. When the British Government's attitude to the Palestine problem in the autumn of 1945 is considered,

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43. Allon, p 25.

one aspect defies explanation. This is their apparent inability or unwillingness to see the post-war Jewish refugee problem as an important new factor in the Palestine immigration issue. One possible solution can be proposed, although it cannot be proved. It is that wartime Zionist propaganda against the White Paper policy, which developed strong anti-British overtones, offended British policy makers and closed their minds to the very factor that, on the world stage, the propaganda had set out to magnify. If this was the case, then the extremists within Zionism had already undermined 'Constructive Warfare' and set the stage for conflict rather than persuasion.[44]

An Outline of Events, 1945-1948

1: Political

British attempts to find a solution to the Palestine problem were inhibited in several ways. Her imperial interests required the retention of bases in the territory. This need not necessarily have been incompatible with Jewish and Arab aspirations; however, these same interests also needed the free flow of oil, and communication rights, which depended upon Arab goodwill. This imposed obvious limitations on Jewish hopes. Economic weakness made Britain dependent upon American aid and, therefore, American goodwill. This goodwill might be lost if Britain ignored Zionist requirements. Economic weakness combined with pressures to demobilise servicemen as quickly as possible also discouraged the acceptance of any solution that might have to be imposed by force. The search was on for some answer to the problem that satisfied the Jews and the Americans without antagonising the Arabs and which left Britain with a relatively free hand in Palestine without undue cost. Since no one in Westminster or Whitehall could suggest such an answer, the problem was referred to a committee.

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44. It is ironic that a special branch for Jewish propaganda had been set up by the British Foreign Office in 1918 within the Department of Information. Controlled by 'a very active Zionist propagandist called A Hyamson', the branch prepared leaflets that were dropped by planes over German and Austrian territory calling on Jews in the Central armies to desert because 'the Allies are giving the Land of Israel to the people of Israel ... ' See Ingrams, p 19.

In November 1945 an Anglo-American Committee examined the question. Before they began, violence had broken out. Not liking the recommendations of that first committee, the Government in July 1946 put forward a scheme of 'provincial autonomy', which was a watered-down version of the 1943 partition plan. Violence by now had increased. The Arabs would not accept this scheme, and the Zionists could only agree to their own counter-proposal, which envisaged partition along lines somewhat similar to the Israel boundaries that emerged from the War of Independence in 1948. While negotiations dragged on, violence in Palestine grew still worse, undermining confidence and destroying trust. Moreover a new Palestine Arab policy directed by the Mufti of Jerusalem[45] hardened Arab opposition to any solution that might be acceptable to the Jews. Christopher Sykes remarked: 'To the end the Government had clung to bi-nationalism, to a wishful picture of Jewish and Arab workers and politicians blithely hand-in-hand. Mr Bevin (the Foreign Secretary) could never see why two peoples showed no wish to fulfil that dream.'[46] One week after these negotiations finally broke down, on 14 February 1947, Mr Bevin, tacitly admitting that the problem defied solution within Britain's terms, announced that the Mandate was to be referred back to the United Nations Organisation by the British Government without the latter recommending any particular solution. A UN Special Committee was formed which recommended an extraordinary partition scheme which the Zionists, perhaps tongue in cheek, accepted, and the Arabs rejected. Britain refused to implement any scheme unacceptable to both communities and announced her intention to withdraw. Issued partly as a threat,[47] the announcement had to be honoured as a promise. On 15 May 1948 the Mandate ended and the State of Israel came into existence.

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45. The Mufti, an admirer of Hitler, had led the 1937-39 Arab Revolt.

46. Sykes, p 370.

47. 'The Foreign Secretary thought it conceivable that the announcement might induce Jews and Arabs to co-operate.' (Minutes of Chiefs of Staff (47) 117th Meeting, 8 September 1947.)

An Outline of Events, 1945-1948
2: Military

The period from 31 October 1945 to the end of the Mandate was one of continual violence. Particularly grave events punctuate the record, but on the whole the level of Jewish violence rose steadily until late in 1947, when the United Nations voted in favour of partition. Thereafter the level rose very rapidly, but now the emphasis was on violence between Jews and Arabs.

The two-year campaign of Jewish attacks on the British can be divided into two phases. The first, from the end of October 1945 till late Summer 1946, was the era of the United Resistance Movement. Thereafter, the extremists, Irgun and the Stern, operated on their own. Illegal immigration took place continually during both phases, and was Haganah's priority task.

Referring to the United Resistance, Yigal Allon has written: 'The British counter-actions had the character of police actions rather than full scale military operations. At a later stage in the conflict, the British were indeed obliged to intensify their counter-operations, extending them beyond the Haganah units to civil settlements and the arresting of national leaders. These more severe (and more successful) police actions, however, already marked the beginning of the end of British rule in Palestine. For they proved that the British were fighting not merely isolated small groups of militant extremists but a national liberation movement which embraced the entire community. They alienated world public opinion, and turned their para-military victory into a political defeat.'[48] This British 'victory' will be considered shortly. First it is necessary to trace the course of the United Resistance.

The strategy of 'constructive warfare' was vulnerable in two ways. If the British employed really tough tactics they might break the Jewish leaders' willingness to expose the Yishuv to hardship. And if by any means the British weakened Haganah below the level necessary for national defence against the Arabs, all might be lost. The Jews relied upon British national character and world public opinion,

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48. Allon, p 28.

instructed by the Zionist propaganda machine, to neutralise the first danger. Against the second, they relied upon the hope that limited violence might be met only by limited counter-measures, and as a second line of defence they devised wonderfully effective concealment for the precious arms.

'Constructive Warfare' conducted jointly by Haganah, Irgun and Stern, began on 31 October 1945. As a general rule Haganah limited its sabotage operations to targets such as coastguard stations that directly affected illegal immigration. On 31 October, however, and again eight months later, it made widespread raids to demonstrate its power to the authorities. The first involved hundreds of explosions cutting railway lines; the second destroyed bridges throughout the length and breadth of Palestine. Irgun's and Stern's tactics were, in contrast to Haganah's, elitist and sensationalist. Irgun raided airfields and destroyed 'planes and Stern murdered seven soldiers in a Tel Aviv car park. The brutality and spitefulness of the extremist actions changed completely the tone of 'Constructive Warfare' as originally envisaged by the Jewish Agency. Instead of exerting controlled pressure on Britain, the spasm violence was generating mutual hatred. Whilst the Sternists remained throughout a tiny fringe element, devoted to assassination, Irgun's strength and prestige grew with each new and bold venture. The threat posed to the 'alternative government' by this rival must have worried the Agency leaders. Moreover, by their indulgence in murder, the Irgun forced the British Government to sanction the very type of large-scale counter-measures that the Agency had hoped would not be justified by a subtle campaign. Until June 1946 countering insurgency remained a police responsibility. The Army was constantly involved, but always in a reactive manner. Except when so deployed, the military concentrated on training and such diversions as sport and sight-seeing, and soldiers off duty went unarmed. On 18 June, however, Irgun seized five officers from the Jaffa Club as hostages. Coming hard on the heels of Haganah's attacks on bridges, this was too much. A massive counter-strike was authorised.

Operation 'Agatha' was aimed at Haganah, about whose leadership the CID was well informed, and at the Jewish Agency. Not unreasonably, the Administration took the view that since Haganah co-ordinated the

United Resistance, they should be held responsible for all insurgency, and since the Jewish Agency controlled Haganah, certain leaders should be held responsible for the political direction of the campaign. The police and military would, of course, have liked to get their hands on the dissidents too, but intelligence on Irgun and Stern was proving hard to come by. 'Agatha' involved almost all field force Army units in Palestine in a well co-ordinated dawn swoop on thousands of addresses. Deception and security were carefully controlled, and early on 29 June 1946 military signals personnel took over civilian telephone exchanges to block warning messages. The lessons of previous experience had been learned. By excluding Jewish policemen and officials from knowledge of the plan, complete surprise was achieved.

Operation 'Agatha' was a success. Although a few senior Haganah leaders escaped in time, according to Dekel because of a tip-off by a sympathetic Englishman,[49] commanders at field level were arrested in numbers that virtually immobilised Palmach as an effective military force. Agency leaders made no efforts to evade arrest, as going 'underground' would have destroyed their mask of innocence and disqualified them from future negotiations. Nevertheless the detention of senior leaders weakened Zionism at a vital moment since it excluded these individuals from decision-making. In July the British Government announced its proposals for 'provincial autonomy' and events appeared to be moving towards some kind of climax. With Palmach incapacitated at a moment when Arab violence might suddenly explode, the release of Zionist leaders was something for which the remaining Agency hierarchy were willing to pay a high price.

On top of the arrests came another blow to Haganah. More by good luck than special knowledge, troops searching the settlement of Mesheq Yagur unearthed a series of arms caches, recovering 600 weapons, including machine guns and mortars.[50] In the process, secret methods of arms concealment were revealed and representatives of all British units in Palestine visited Mesheq Yagur to learn where to look in future. This further weakening of Haganah's ability to defend the

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49. Dekel, pp 142-151.

50. Gregory Blaxland, The Regiments Depart (London, 1971), p 38.

Yishuv, and the implications for the future[51] made many Haganah leaders as anxious as the Agency to seek an accommodation with the British that would end the pressure. If either Agency or Haganah still had doubts, Irgun on 22 July resolved them. By blowing up a wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem housing the Government Secretariat with the loss of 91 lives, many of them Jewish, the Irgun made stark the choices open to the Zionist leaders. Either they ended their alliance with the extremists or they must associate themselves with all-out 'terrorism'. In the latter case the Agency leaders would have to go underground, disappearing from the world political scene. In such circumstances, might not the more experienced, more ruthless Begin emerge triumphant? On 29 October the Inner Zionist Council condemned terrorism and called on the Yishuv to take action against the extremists. The British responded by liberating the Agency leaders, calling off the offensive against Haganah, and permitting the entry into Palestine of 2,800 illegal immigrants detained in Cyprus. The Agency ended the United Resistance and ordered Haganah to refrain from further violence. Haganah signalled this fact by attacking the dissidents in their propaganda. The British had won their 'para-military victory'.

This success need not necessarily have been doomed to end, in Allon's words, in political defeat for Britain. The Army's successes in 1938 and 1939 had paved the way for a political settlement with the Arabs. The climb-down by Zionist leaders in October 1946 might have been the prelude to a similar solution. Unfortunately the British had insufficient to offer the Yishuv. Their plan for provincial autonomy had been published, perhaps unwisely, in the immediate aftermath of Operation 'Agatha', and by October was already half-way consigned to the museum of rejected Palestine 'solutions'. Even if the Jews had liked it, Britain's unwillingness to enforce it in the face of Arab objections robbed the exercise of reality. Britain's plan, so far as the Jews were concerned, was still not to have a plan, and this made the task of administration and security in Palestine impossibly difficult,

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51. In August 1946 troops searching Dorot settlement in the Negev made another considerable arms find. See R D Wilson, Cordon and Search, (Aldershot, 1949), p 79.

just as it deprived moderate Zionist leaders of hope of restraining the extremists.

Had there been real hope for a settlement, this might have led the Jews into honouring the Central Executive's call to take action against the extremists, which in reality needed a decision by the Agency to order Haganah into action against Irgun and Stern. Without a political settlement, the Agency did nothing of the sort. In Dr J Bowyer Bell's view, the Agency was well aware that, 'if the united resistance ceased, the Irgun and the Stern Group would keep up the pressure in any case, leaving the Agency free to negotiate with clear hands'.[52] In other words, the Zionists could benefit by the violent coercion, without being held responsible: the Irgun could attract the full force of British counter-measures, and any losses they might suffer would weaken their position as a rival to the Agency. 'Constructive Warfare', in the form dictated by the alliance with extremists, had failed. Persuasion would now be abandoned in favour of coercion, which would make use of Irgun and Stern terrorism to make British opinion sicken for its Mandatory responsibilities, and of World Zionist political leverage, mainly through the United States, to force a pro-Jewish solution.

Irgun's operations were marked by outstanding originality, detailed planning and daring execution. The operations officer, Amihai 'Gideon' Paglin, was both tactical and technical innovator, creating such now familiar devices as the car and lorry bomb, the electrically detonated roadside mine, various types of explosive charges equipped with sophisticated anti-handling embellishments, and for special actions, special equipments such as the barrel-bomb that demolished part of the Central Police HQ in Haifa. The Irgun's most famous exploits included the attack on the Goldsmith Officers Club in Jerusalem which killed 13, the Acre Gaol break of 4 May 1947, and the murder of the hostages Sergeants Martin and Paice in July 1947. The Stern group's contributions were mainly in the form of individual murders, usually 'soft targets' such as off-duty servicemen, but they also harassed the railway traffic and in one such attack managed to kill five.

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52. Bell (i), p 59.

Against the Agency-sponsored United Resistance the security forces had been able to respond with some success by broad front tactics. Against the dissidents, needle-sharp thrusts were needed to eliminate the underground fighters. Without good intelligence, such thrusts could seldom be made. During reactive operations the troops sometimes achieved successes. After an Irgun attack on Yibna railway station, the raiding party was hunted down and 30 armed Jews surrendered to ten paratroops. 'This was one of the few occasions on which British troops fought an action with the dissidents in the open. Whenever such engagements took place the outcome was never in doubt.'[53] In the immediate aftermath of the Acre Gaol break, a military bathing party on a nearby beach provided the only effective counter, killing four Irgun attackers and five escapers, and capturing thirteen. Such spirited exploits could not, however, compensate for complete loss of the initiative to the insurgents.

When police methods of collecting information fail, due to the force no longer enjoying consensus support from the community, one method of redressing the situation is for the army to make 'contact' and build up intelligence by their own methods. In conventional war 'contact' means simply to close up to enemy forces and keep them constantly under observation, and is important to any commander both as an insurance against surprise and as a source of information on which to base his own plans. To be out of contact is to court disaster. In much the same way army units can be deployed permanently in the midst of a civil community that is shielding insurgents. Working within the law, trained soldiers remarkably quickly get to know everybody, see every event, notice every unusual occurrence. Insurgents can no longer feel safe and their presence becomes unwelcome to many erstwhile supporters. Their style is cramped and they make mistakes. Slowly, the initiative is wrested from them. The Army in Palestine deployed in something approaching this manner only when it was too late, when the United Nations partition scheme had set Jews and Arabs at each others' throats. It is possible that military contact at an earlier stage might have made things much more difficult for the extremists.

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53. Wilson, p 45.

In January 1947 the Cabinet authorised new terms of reference for counter-insurgency in Palestine. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field-Marshal Montgomery, was satisfied that if the new powers 'were fully used and the military authorities were enabled to keep the initiative against the terrorists, they would be able to bring terrorism under control'.[54] The Cabinet went so far as to assure the Palestine authorities: 'Such action as you may take to implement the policy ... will receive the full support of His Majesty's Government.'[55] Mr David Charters has seen this directive as a 'blank cheque' for illegal security force activities, inevitably leading to disaster.[56]

There are two ways, in addition to 'contact', by which security forces whose normal intelligence sources have failed may seek to defeat insurgency - special surveillance and counter-terror. The first calls for personnel of very high calibre and special training who infiltrate covertly, gather information, and provide a substitute for ordinary police informers. Acting on the information thus obtained, conventional security force units are able to arrest insurgents. Special surveillance operates within the law and is perhaps the most demanding role imaginable. It can be extremely effective. Counter-terror, on the other hand, involves placing police or military above the law, in the manner resorted to by the British in Ireland in 1920 and the French in Algeria in 1957. Control is almost impossible and abuse inevitable. Short-term gains are quickly extinguished by long-term reverses. When the forces of law and order adopt unlawful tactics their moral and legal authority dissolves. The campaign is lost by the methods employed. Clearly, whenever special surveillance is authorised, the operating limits imposed by law must be understood by all concerned.

The role and operations of the special group set up by the Palestine Police in March 1947 have never been fully disclosed.[57]

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54. Minutes of 6th (47) War Cabinet Meeting, 15 January 1947, 'Palestine - Use of Armed Forces', File 0176/727 (Palestine Policy), WO 32-10260.

55. Cabinet meeting (47) 6th Conclusions, 15 January 1947, CAB 128/9.

56. David Charters (i) 'Special Operations in Counter-Insurgency: The Farran Case, Palestine 1947', article in Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, Vol 124, No. 2 (June, 1979).

57. Charters is the best account published so far.

During the summer the Jewish newspapers campaigned for an investigation into the alleged abduction and murder of a Stern group youth, and the international press soon joined the hunt. At the centre of this furore was a distinguished Army officer, Major Roy Farran. On 1 October he was tried by court martial and, although he was acquitted for lack of evidence, 'the gallant career of an exemplary officer was allowed to end in wretched confusion'.[58] One may object to the double standards of those who, while protecting the insurgents in their midst from the law, used that same law to discredit and destroy a threat to the security of murderers. Nevertheless the blame for this sorry incident must lie with those responsible for directing, or misdirecting, the special group.[59] It seems possible that Farran's terms of reference were ill-defined, so that he operated in a certain manner believing that he would be supported, but was disappointed. In a diffused way, this is rather what happened to all Britain's security forces who strave , for two and half years, to support in Palestine a British Government policy that did not exist.

The Propaganda War
1: The Zionists

It is possible that the adulteration of wartime Zionist pre-propaganda by Revisionist extremism flawed the strategy of 'Constructive Warfare' before it was put into effect. Too much hatred may have been concocted in Jewish hearts, and too much suspicion and resentment in the minds of British officials, for so subtle a policy to have much chance of success. If this was the case, then here was an occasion when propaganda ruled policy, instead of the reverse. Zionist leaders seemed to have been aware of this danger, and tried to compensate by addressing different messages to various target audiences. Thus, in Mr Christopher Sykes's words:

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58. Sykes, p 367, Also Times (London, 2, 3 October 1947).

59. See PRO file 75015/94 Secret Police Anti-Terrorist Measures CO537/2270.

> It became a Zionist habit to speak not only in two but in several voices, to run several lines of persuasion at the same time. A result was to debauch the movement with propaganda to an extraordinary extent so that Zionists, pre-occupied with higher truth at the expense of the yet more essential lower truth, got a not undeserved reputation in the world for chronic mendacity. 60

In fact, as we have seen in earlier studies, there is nothing uncommon in a Movement addressing divers messages to 'friends', 'neutrals' and 'enemies', but it is always important not to be caught out in blatant inconsistency. Evidently the Jewish Agency was. This may have been due in part to the unusually complex intermingling of these audiences, and to the conflict of understanding within Zionism over whether the British Government and public was to be considered 'neutral', and open to persuasion, or 'enemy', to be coerced. It was probably not until the collapse of 'Constructive Warfare' late in 1946 that the Official Jewish leaders reluctantly fell into line with the extremist view. Even then, they left it mainly to the Irgun to apply the coercion for them, retaining in their overt actions the semblance of their original strategy.

We will never know whether or not 'Constructive Warfare', if conducted without the handicaps of over-stated propaganda and extremists within the Zionist camp, could have succeeded. In the Autumn of 1945 the British people, no less than any other, pitied the plight of Europe's surviving Jews and admired the achievement of Zionism in Palestine. We can understand the Zionist leaders' disappointment when the Labour Government disowned its party's recent resolution. Nevertheless the fact that such a resolution had been passed illustrated the power of the pro-Jewish lobby within the Labour Movement. Helped by a great surge of public demand, which persuasive propaganda in conjunction with 'Constructive Warfare' might have produced, these elements might have overturned the policies of Bevin and his advisors. We may see it as a singular failure of Zionist strategy that this reservoir of goodwill was turned instead into hostility. The savage acts of Irgun and Stern, unrestrained by the Yishuv, soured British opinion and saddened British Jews. This community, in their hearts as anxious

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60. Sykes, p 26.

as any to see the National Home established, was disgusted by the murders and retreated into political isolation.[61]

Similar ineptitude marked the reception by the Yishuv and the Jewish Agency propaganda machine of the 6th Airborne Division when it appeared in Palestine in the Autumn of 1945. Its arrival was denounced as a brutal provocation. Before setting foot in the country, its soldiers were described by the Jewish press as belonging to the Gestapo. This struck the men concerned as remarkable, it being only six months since they had led the Allied advance across Germany, in the process freeing many survivors of Hitler's 'final solution'. The soldier 'was intensely mystified by the attitude of the Jews towards his country and towards him as a soldier. If he had expected to find an atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality, he was disappointed'.[62] Properly directed, Zionist propaganda could almost without doubt have made friends out of this aggressively 'non conformist' division, and who can say where such an achievement might have led. The men who controlled this propaganda were apparently sufficiently under the spell of their earlier inventions that no course more subtle than demonology occurred to them. This exactly suited Irgun and Stern, since it served to justify murder. At that stage at least, murder was not part of the Jewish Agency's scheme. Again, propaganda was dictating policy, to the detriment of 'Constructive Warfare'.

Agency and Haganah propaganda in support of 'Constructive Warfare' was founded upon the basic assumptions described earlier and dealt with such issues as immigration, Jewish national unity and resolve, British injustice, and the disciplined power of Haganah. The final objective of statehood was muted, with the immigration issue being used as a tactical or interim aim. Haganah's main task was assistance of immigration and a wonderful international network was established to bring Jews from Europe by all imaginable means. This task was a clear and noble duty to Zionists, necessary for reasons of humanity and national strength. Immigration also provided a propaganda harvest of huge proportions. Whenever a batch of illegal immigrants[63] evaded the

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61. Histradruth, the Zionist Labour Movement, did try, with small success, to influence the British Government through the TUC.

62. Wilson, p 15.

63. For a full account of this traffic see Kimche, Op cit.

Royal Navy and coastguards and was smuggled to safety in the Yishuv, the whole community rejoiced and belittled the Mandatory Power: whenever an immigrant ship was boarded by the Navy, or when luckless refugees were caught stumbling across some remote Palestinian beach, bathos was made from what was, without embellishment, a real human tragedy. One account of this embellishment makes the point clear:

> If casualties had been suffered during the boarding, these were displayed, including the dead. The length to which the striving for propaganda was carried is illustrated by the example of the exhibition on one occasion of a one year old child who had died at sea several days previously, with the statement to the Press:
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> "The dirty Nazi-British assassins suffocated this innocent victim with gas". The sotto voce remark, "It's not against you, it's for the Press," made by one of the more moderate passengers to some of the troops, hardly compensated for their satanic lie. 64

The climax to this campaign came in the summer of 1947, in the form of an immigrant ship named Exodus 1947.

Exodus was boarded by the Royal Navy as soon as she entered Palestinian waters. As she approached Haifa the Haganah activists on board broadcast emotive messages to the Yishuv. News agencies picked these up and the ship became news. Previous British practice had been to deport illegal immigrants to camps in Cyprus. On this occasion the Foreign Office decided that the passengers should be returned whence they came, Toulon. It would seem that European governments were to be discouraged from allowing this traffic through their ports. In a spotlight of publicity the immigrants were transhipped onto three vessels in Haifa port, each with a military escort on board, and the convoy sailed westwards.[65]

At Toulon the French expressed willingness to accept the Jews ashore if they would disembark voluntarily. When they made this offer the French may already have been aware that Haganah's agents, who had got to Toulon before the ships, would see to it that no one volunteered. This at any rate was what happened, and the British authorities were

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64. Wilson, p 110.

65. For a Zionist account, see David C Holly, Exodus 1947 (Boston, 1969).

embarrassed. Making the best of a bad job, the Foreign Office eventually decided to send the ships to Hamburg, in the Zone of Germany then under British Military Government. There it would be possible to remove the passengers forcibly. During the long journey the Jews grew to respect their British escorts, finding it strange that the barbarians for which Zionist propaganda had prepared them were sympathetic and kind. On the last leg of the voyage, the militants who intended to demonstrate on arrival 'apologised in advance for the resistance which they were determined to put up at Hamburg, and explained that its object would not be directed at the troops, but their Government'[66]. In all, the drama of Exodus 1947 ran for two months, enabling Zionist propaganda to wring the last drop of emotion out of an opportunity so gratuitiously provided by London's failure to think the problem through.[67]

The 'mobilisation' of the Yishuv had begun the moment the Jewish Agency was set up under the terms of the 1921 Mandate. Official Zionist control was complete in all rural districts and in all the Kibbutzim. Irgun influence through the existence of cells and the spreading of their propaganda was limited to urban areas, particularly the main cities, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa. Even in the towns the mass of the Yishuv was obedient to the Agency and loyal to Haganah. Their loyalty to Irgun, where it existed, was like affection for an errant younger brother: it did not affect relations with father. National discipline and determination do not in themselves make news or propaganda. These qualities need to be demonstrated in dramatic form before the world will take notice. Early in the campaign it was evidently decided that citizens should be brought into conflict with the Security Forces, both to provide 'propaganda of the deed' and, if successful in temporarily destroying Mandatory rule, to erode British authority and confidence.

In November 1945 the youths of Tel Aviv were organised, almost certainly by Haganah, for riot, arson and confrontation. The Palestine Police were unable to control the situation and called for military

66. Wilson, p 138.

67. In fictionalised form the drama continues to this day, in the book and film of that name, by Leon Uris.

assistance. First one and later three parachute battalions were deployed in the city.[68] Every effort was made to disperse the mobs without bloodshed. The Jews, bravely but unwisely, virtually forced the troops to open fire. When the riots ended, six Jews were dead.[69] No doubt the controlled and disciplined military response disappointed those Zionists who had hoped that soldiers would run amok, and certainly the unyielding British reaction deterred further massed demonstrations in cities. Nevertheless the confrontations and the deaths were ammunition enough for a propaganda pay off. One example is sufficient. Mr Meyer Levin of the New York Post reported that British troops, while singing the Nazi Horst Wessel song, had deliberately shot twenty children aged 8-16 and expressed the desire to 'pop-off' more.[70]

The confrontation technique was kept alive in settlements, as a means of shielding wanted men from arrest, obstructing arms searches, involving Jews of all ages in 'resistance' and making propaganda. Children were drilled to spit and shout insults at troops and to crowd around water taps so that no one else could get near.[71] Women were thrust to the front of crowds blocking entrances, so that they had to be physically removed by the soldiers. On one occasion a zealot led a massed surge from horseback against a platoon of troops.[72] The Jewish Agency's propaganda service ensured that news reporters were taken to such settlements as quickly as possible after the troops had left, to see and hear 'evidence' of British atrocities. Wherever possible, photographs would be taken by a settlement photographer during the search, showing troops and civilians in conflict, to be made available to the press. Villagers would tell lurid tales of brutality and vandalism, suitable for public consumption, especially when supported by 'Nazi slogans' chalked on walls[73], supposedly by soldiers.

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68. The writer was a platoon leader in the first battalion to be called out.

69. Wilson, pp 26-29.

70. Overseas News Agency Report on Action by British Troops in Tel Aviv, 20 November, 1945, PRO File E 9183, FO 371/45386.

71. Described to the writer in 1966 by a major in the Israel Defence Force, who in 1946 had been a boy in Deganiah.

72. Blaxland, p 33.

73. Dekel, p 165.

Haganah's large-scale operations against railways and bridges, as well as many smaller actions, had the objectives of training the force, in some cases of securing military advantage in the course of illegal immigration, and of advertising the military strength available to the Jewish leaders. Haganah did not attempt to make Palestine appear ungovernable: it was content to demonstrate a potential. International propaganda dividends from Haganah actions were, however, overshadowed by the spectacular and horrific deeds of the extremists, and were weak. Through their radio station 'The Voice of Israel', Haganah also addressed Palestinian Arabs, supporting the line laid down by Ben Gurion. The Jews, these broadcasts said, had a quarrel with Britain, not with the Arabs. Britain was to blame for communal troubles and Arabs should form a united front with the Jews against the Mandatory Power.[74]

Overseas the Official Zionist message was amplified by the World Zionist Organisation's branch offices and, through them, by local supporters. Funds were gathered in the USA by the American-Jewish 'Joint Distribution Committee', usually known as 'the Joint'. During the pre-propaganda phase in World War II the British Embassy in Washington had been sufficiently alarmed by this amplification to seek assistance. The Ministry of Information transferred Miss Freya Stark from the Near East to make a lecture tour of North America. Her account testifies to the effectiveness of Zionist emotion-based propaganda. Audiences, she said, were 'full of rock-like integrity impervious to sense'.[75] Although the official Zionists had superior control over the Yishuv, the Revisionists, through the New Zionist Organisation, succeeded in achieving a disproportionate influence in many places overseas, especially America. Between 1945 and 1947 Menachem Begin managed to convert these Revisionist strongholds into Irgun support units, for the purposes of fund-raising, arms supply and propaganda.

In the summer of 1940 a young man called Hillel Kook, who had worked as Irgun representative at the New Zionist Organisation headquarters in London, moved to the United States where he adopted the

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74. 3 Parachute Brigade Intelligence Summary No 2, 21 November 1945, Pt I - Illegal Broadcasting by Kol Israel. PRO WO 169/19705.

75. Freya Stark (i), p 205.

alias of Peter Bergson.[76] Bergson set up the 'Hebrew Committee for National Liberation' (HCNL) as an additional Irgun front organisation, in the process evolving an extraordinary propaganda line of his own, disliked by orthodox and revisionist Zionists, which split Jews between 'Hebrews', who wished to join the National Home, and 'Jews' who did not. The idea was to free American Jews from the fear that to support Jewish independence in Palestine would undermine their identity as Americans and require them to emigrate.[77]

In March 1946 British military intelligence reported 'that five US Congressmen met together and agreed that America would be well within her rights in taking unilateral action by using American ships to move displaced American Jews into Palestine. Peter Bergson, Chairman of HCNL, declared that the people of Palestine must take matters into their own hands "by a kind of revolution" and get displaced persons into the country. He proposed that America support the use of Hebrew ships, manned by Hebrew personnel, to get Jews into Palestine'.[78] Earlier, when reporting that Senator Gillette was to work as an advisor to Bergson's Committee, an official in the British Embassy, Washington, noted that 'Bergson is described as a semitic Himmler'.[79] HCNL itself was merely an eight-man committee which acted as the governing body of the 'American League for a Free Palestine' (ALFP), also headed by Bergson.[80] The ALFP mobilised mass support for Irgun, claiming by August 1947 140,000 members.[81] Mr Samuel Katz, Begin's chief of overseas propaganda in Palestine, claimed that, by Bergson's efforts, 'a powerful body of support among congressmen, senators, and other public figures was built up and many gave liberally of their time and energy to press the Jewish cause upon

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76. Katz, p 66.

77. Katz, p 71.

78. PRO General Staff Intelligence Middle East Forces, Appx 5, WO 169/22882.

79. Memorandum on Jewish Affairs in the US, 10 September 1945. Item 54, PRO File 75872/134. CO 733/463 Pt I.

80. Samuel Halperin, The Political World of American Zionism, (Detroit, 1961), pp 318-320.

81. PRO File E 7462, FO 371/61860.

the government and upon American public opinion. The Bergson group was also extremely effective with American Jewish intellectuals who had previously shown little interest in Zionism; Ben Hecht, Louis Bromfield, Konrad Bercovici, Francis Gunther, Stella Adler, and many others became active exponents of the cause of Jewish nationalism'.[82] Revisionist groups also attracted support from such notable figures as Herbert Hoover, William Randolph Hearst, William Allen White, Jimmy Durante, Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, and an unknown young actor called Marlon Brando.[83] Charters has also written an interesting article on the international financing of Irgun terrorism, in which he reveals how the American criminal underworld donated parts of its ill-gotten gains to Irgun. In one dinner in Los Angeles alone, where Hecht was the keynote speaker, $ 200,000 was raised from the local élite of crime.[84]

Public figures won over to the Zionist cause lost no time in publicising their loyalties. The comedian Eddie Cantor took a page in the New York Times which attacked Britain under the heading 'I thought Hitler was Dead'.[85] Not to be outdone, Bergson banged the Irgun drum in the liberal New York paper PM. Under the heading 'Proclamation on the Palestine Resistance'[86] he described an Irgun Fund-raising scheme which was to be run by the New York-based 'Palestine Resistance Committee' (another of Bergson's fronts). The notice stressed the Committee's total independence of the Jewish Agency and went on: 'The Jewish underground soldiers need help! Wounded need medicine, bandages

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82. Katz, p 68.

83. Robert Silverberg, If I forget thee O Jerusalem; American Jews and the State of Israel, (New York, 1970), p 325.

84. David Charters (ii) so-far unpublished monogram Mandate for Terror: The International Operations of the Irgun Zwai Leumi, 1946-47, 1978. (The writer of this Thesis has been fortunate in that he has worked at King's College, London at the same time that Mr Charters has been researching Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Palestine 1945-1947. Through Mr Charters's unselfish assistance information, references, insights and advice have been made freely available. Short-cuts to references, 11, 12, 15, 18, 25, 27, 41, 70, 74, 78, 79, 86, 107, 108, 110 and 111 have been taken by this assistance.)

85. Sykes, p 353.

86. Advertisement sponsored by the American League for a Free Palestine in the 2 December 1946 edition of PM, New York. PRO File E 11991, FO 371/52571.

and surgical instruments! The Patriots in the field (and those in prisons) need food as well as many other necessities required for successful ACTIVE RESISTANCE to the British occupants and oppressors'.[87]

Hecht wrote a play for the New York stage called 'A Flag is Born' which stressed the martyrdom of executed Irgunists, and became infamous in Britain for his advertisement in the New York Herald Tribune and fourteen other papers headed 'Letter to the Terrorists of Palestine'. Part of the letter read:

> Every time you blow up a British arsenal, or wreck a British jail, or send a British railroad train sky high, or rob a British bank, or let go with your guns and bombs at the British betrayers and invaders of your homeland, the Jews of America make a little holiday in their hearts. [88]

The text illustrates nicely the Irgun propaganda assumptions listed earlier: 'your homeland' implying historical and moral rights that extinguish Arab and other claims; 'British ... invaders' denying the legitimacy of the League of Nations Mandate. It shows how propagandists seldom argue their assumptions but simply advance from them. Thus Hecht was able to encourage murder and the gloating over victims without his message seeming so crude, at least to his susceptible American audience. Although perhaps not appearing crude, his message was certainly dramatic and therefore newsworthy. Newspapers all over the world picked his advertisement up and turned it into a news item, multiplying the propaganda effect. In return for this help, Irgun named their immigrant ship Ben Hecht.

In Palestine Samuel Katz organised the publication of Irgunpress, which appeared in English, French, German and Italian editions. He also wrote books in praise of the underground and translated Irgun broadcasts. As 'official spokesman' he briefed such journalists as Lucien Frank of Agence France Presse, Carter Davidson of Associated Press, Moshe Brilliant of the New York Times and Ruth Gruber of the

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87. Sponsors listed were the United Zionist Revisionists of America, Inc, the American League for a Free Palestine, Inc, the National Jewish Council, the Brith Trumpeldor of America, Inc, the American Sea and Air Volunteers for Hebrew Repatriation, the Asirai Zion Fund, Inc, the Palestine Emergency Fund, Inc, the League for Jewish National Labor in Palestine, Inc, and the National Jewish Youth Council and Nordau Circle, Inc.

88. Advertisement inserted by Ben Hecht in New York Herald Tribune, (15 May 1947).

New York Herald Tribune.[89] Begin heaps praise on Quentin Reynolds, 'an old friend of the fighting underground, one of the most active supporters of the American League for a Free Palestine'.[90] With allies like these, it is perhaps hardly surprising that Begin was able to boast that 'Eretz Israel was a centre of world interest. The revolt had made it so. It is a fact that no partisan struggle has been so publicized throughout the world as was ours ... The reports on our operations, under screaming headlines, covered the front pages of newspapers everywhere, particularly in the United States'.[91] The Irgun valued this publicity mainly for its political leverage effect, but in addition it was seen as 'a kind of invisible lifebelt round the Jewish population' that supported the Yishuv against the possibility of rough British counter-measures.[92] The whole strategy of the Irgun's revolt depended upon two contradictory propositions: British evil justifying murder and British merit ensuring that murder would go unrevenged. Not only did this promiscuity survive unchallenged during the struggle, it lives on in the propaganda histories. If the first proposition fades, all that the apologists of the Irgun are left with is murder.

Begin's 1944 proclamation of his revolt was, within the terms dictated by his assumptions, a sensible and convincing outline of future strategy. Moreover he never wavered from it. The British, he forecast, would be forced to quit Palestine not by the 'controlled pressure' of the Agency's 'Constructive Warfare', which involved a process of persuasion, but because they would have no other option. Other options would be demolished by Irgun violence that would make Palestine, both in fact and in appearance, ungovernable, at least by any methods acceptable to British consciences or to world opinion. Although the 'invisible lifebelt' would protect the Yishuv from counter-terror, the struggle would nevertheless force the authorities into policies that would offend world opinion. Properly interpreted and amplified, these offences would create political leverage in

89. Katz, p 130.

90. Begin, p 314.

91. Begin, p 55.

92. Begin, p 55.

America and the United Nations Organisation that would push Britain towards a decision to abandon the already ungovernable Mandate. From being seen as an asset, Palestine would increasingly be seen by the British as a liability. This 'Asset-to-Liability-Shift' was the crux of Irgun strategy, which was essentially psychological. Rebel leaders often claim in memoires to have planned their campaigns in the way that events turned out, ignoring the element of chance which more often than not determines the outcome. In Begin's case it really does seem that however careless his strategy may have been with Zionist unity, and however much it depended upon indirect effects, he had a clear policy and stuck to it:

> History and our observation persuaded us that if we could succeed in destroying the government's prestige in Eretz Israel, the removal of its rule would follow automatically. Thence forward we gave no peace to this weak spot. Throughout all the years of our uprising, we hit at the British government's prestige, deliberately, tirelessly, unceasingly.[93]

In these studies the word 'credibility'implies more than just a reputation for speaking the truth, useful though this may be as a starting point. It suggests intelligent leadership, a strategy with some hope of achieving success, the capability of applying the strategy, and the will to see the struggle through to the end. Begin perfectly understood all these aspects and throughout his struggle he valued the accummulation by the Irgun of credibility above all else. 'We did not soil our mouths or our pens with falsehood', he wrote, 'We told the truth. Good or bad, pleasant or annoying, it was always the truth. This policy lost us temporary rewards, but in the long run it gained us the trust of the people and of the world. They all learnt that our statements were facts. They all learnt that our warnings were fulfilled.'[94] By the skilful matching of facts to earlier forecasts, the Irgun's credibility endowed these extremists with the mantle of apparent irresistibility. Begin's campaign had the character of propaganda of the deed with a third dimension, movement, which carried his world audience smoothly from one conclusion to the next. 'The chief bearer of the Irgun message was the Assault Force. To it was

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93. Begin, p 52.

94. Begin, p 85.

allotted the task of "hitting the enemy with new weapons in order to disintegrate alien rule".[95] This strategy worked much as planned. Irgun attacks inside Palestine were backed up by activities elsewhere. In the autumn of 1946 the British Embassy in Rome was damaged by a bomb, giving the campaign an international flavour. Each deed undermined British prestige, supplied evidence that Palestine under the Mandate was ungovernable, raised the cost to the British of attempting the impossible, and hastened the process of turning a strategic asset into an economic and diplomatic liability.

The Propaganda War
2: The British

The British response in the war of words and ideas was flawed throughout by the lack of a forward political policy on Palestine. Answers to revolutionary propaganda can be effective if based on a defence of a political status quo, provided that the political situation to be defended has positive virtues, or they can be effective if related to the introduction of new policies, in the manner of counter-revolution. Britain's search for a Palestine settlement demonstrated that she was dissatisfied with the existing arrangements: her failure to find an acceptable compromise deprived her of any new ideal. Both the security campaign and the propaganda war were therefore defensive or negative in character, and thus gravely handicapped.

The strongest counter to Zionist arguments was the need to protect Arab interests in Palestine. The Jews tried to dismiss this as a British invention to divide and rule. The British Government could use the Arab theme in political dialogue. They could not use it in propaganda, except in a muted and subtle way, for fear of seeming to take the Arab side in a dispute over which the British claimed to be acting impartially. Nor dared they prod the Arab leaders into arguing their own case, for fear of bringing on racial strife or rebellion. It was, of course, from the Arabs that a firm propaganda counter to Zionist claims ought to have come, although without an international network like the Diaspora, it is doubtful if they could have matched the Jewish publicity machine.

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95. Begin, p 93.

The arguments that were advanced by Britain concerned strategic interests. These stressed to Western audiences that a free flow of Middle East oil and the containment of Soviet expansionist policies in that area were as important to the USA, France and other free nations as they were to Britain, and should not be put at risk by too hasty support of Zionist aims. In the State Department and other government circles these points were broadly endorsed. It was nevertheless seen as convenient to rely upon Britain to defend these interests without offending pro-Zionist pressure groups at home. Thus Britain got little or no diplomatic support, and was to discover that 'strategic interests' counted zero in the propaganda war, and could even be used to discredit her before audiences that had been educated either to oppose the concept of Empire per se or to envy the British imperial achievement against their own.

Had the Zionists limited their propaganda to rational argument then Britain's rational counters might have been effective. One of the weaknesses of rational propaganda is its vulnerability to such a response. The Jews probably realised this and turned instead to emotional propaganda, which advertisers call the 'hot sell', and which can only be countered on the same level. This is a typical and an effective revolutionary technique. Whereas the rebel, the underdog, working through front organisations and underground outlets, can use the crudest emotional stimuli, the authorities, respectable, accountable and law-abiding, are relatively constrained. In the case of the Mandatory Authorities, there was an additional moral impediment to any resort to 'name-calling'. After all that the Jewish people had endured, to say things that might be interpreted or misinterpreted as 'anti-semetic' would be grossly offensive to opinion almost everywhere. It would seem to imply approval of Nazi policies and methods. Apart from the moral objections, the propaganda side-effects would obviously be dreadful.

It may be thought that one thing that British propaganda could have tried to do was to drive deeper the wedge between the extremists and the rank and file of the Yishuv, between Begin and Ben Gurion. Here again, the lack of forward political policy made such an ambition difficult to achieve, since without being able to show the Yishuv positive benefits from restraint, Agency leaders lacked the means to discredit extremism. Nevertheless, it was possibly mistaken to say or

do things that pushed the Yishuv into the arms of the extremists. This may have been the undesirable outcome of what would otherwise seem to have been the one important British success in the propaganda war.

Between September and November 1945 British security services had intercepted telegrams between the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and Zionist leaders in London. These gave away completely Haganah's alliance with Irgun and Stern, and the Agency's control over the United Resistance Movement. One telegram from Jerusalem began:

> We have come to a working arrangement with the dissident organisations according to which we shall assign certain tasks to them under our command ... 96

For nine months the British kept this intelligence to themselves. It must have made the High Commissioner's dealings with the Jewish Agency rather like those of a husband who knows of his wife's adultery, but who bides his time before confronting her. Suspicion and mistrust are sharpened, and imagination is given free rein. It seems likely that the British, knowing of the alliance but unaware of the strains within that union, gave up all hope of isolating the extremists. The severe disagreements between the Irgun and Stern groups on the one hand, and Hagana on the other, so clearly exposed in Begin's book[97], were known at the time only to a handful of leaders in those three organisations.

On the night of 25 April 1946, seven soldiers of the 6th Airborne Division were murdered by the Stern group in a Tel Aviv car park. Major General Cassels, the divisional commander, summoned the city's mayor to tell him that restrictions were to be placed on the Jewish community as a whole. 'My decision', Cassels explained, 'has been made both in order to maintain public security and because I hold the community to blame. There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that many members either knew of this project or could have given some warning before it happened. Further, I am quite certain that if you, as

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96. Telegram No 5, To London From Jerusalem - 1st November 1945. Quoted in Palestine, Statement of Information Relating to Acts of Violence, Cmd 6783, HMSO, July 1946, p 5.

97. Begin, op cit.

representative of the community of Tel Aviv, chose to do so you could produce sufficient information to lead to the arrest of the criminals'.[98]

The General's remarks expressed the furious indignation felt by every soldier in Palestine, and by most of British opinion at home. They seemed justified to those audiences at the time, and probably were justified by the events. However, as a psychological action the words may have been counter-productive. In April 1946 many Jews in Tel Aviv and throughout Palestine were horrified by the murders perpetrated in their name. By being held collectively responsible for murder, and punished accordingly (if very leniently), such moderates must have felt that, whether they liked it or not, in the eyes of authority they and the murderers were all of one kind. A sense of belonging can develop into a duty to support. A more subtle reaction might have been for Cassels to draw the mayor into schemes of co-operation with the Police, to see in his expressed regret a willingness to encourage his citizens to supply information that might lead to the arrests of the murderers. It should be added that to be effective such a reaction would have needed to be part of an overall psychological policy directed at the highest government and military level, not an isolated act, and it seems probable that the discovery of the alliance prohibited this. We ought also to acknowledge the difficulties that apparently 'wet' responses to such outrages might have created in the fields of police and military discipline and morale. Even as it was, the car park murders gave rise to one of the rare (and fortunately brief) occasions of unlawful vengeance by soldiers against Jews and Jewish property.[99]

The British Government finally published the incriminating telegrams[100] in July 1946, immediately after Operation 'Agatha', using them to justify the arrests of Agency leaders. Although this disclosure robbed Zionist protests of much of their moral force and helped convince the UK public that the operation had achieved a useful purpose, publication may also have signalled the end of hope in

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98. Quoted Wilson, p 47.

99. Wilson, p 48.

100. Cmd 6783.

Westminster that moderates and fanatics within the Zionist movement could be kept apart.

Within days of the disclosures the Jewish Agency, already branded as an accomplice in murder, was to be further embarrassed by the Irgun's King David Hotel outrage. Ninety-one more victims lay at the feet of the Tenuat Hameri. The Agency's predicament was, however, eased by another military statement, which provided a much needed diversion. Published in angry haste by the General Officer Commanding, General Sir Evelyn Barker, this document urged troops to make Jews 'aware of our feelings of contempt and disgust at their behaviour' by boycotting Jewish restaurants, cafes, shops and places of entertainment in order to 'punish the Jews in the manner this race dislikes most; by hitting them in the pocket'.[101] Denounced as anti-semitic, 'these foolishly ill-considered orders of General Barker were blown up into atrocity proportions by skilful propaganda manoeuvres. In Palestine, Europe and America the orders were given well-planned publicity which resulted in Barker's minor misdemeanour completely over-shadowing Irgun's one'.[102] This was an example of quick-witted reaction by skilful propagandists, ever ready to turn the mistakes of the authorities into propaganda victories.

The Irgun took this technique one stage further by creating situations in which the administration had to choose between unattractive options, either of which could be exploited for propaganda effect. An unsuccessful Irgun bank raid, which cost the lives of one policeman and two civilians, ended with the capture of 13 raiders. One of those convicted was under age, and was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment and 18 strokes of the cane. Before the corporal punishment was inflicted Irgun threatened in broadcasts by their illegal radio and in pamphlets that, if the sentence was carried out, they would flog any member of the Army who fell into their hands. The prisoner was caned, and later Irgun kidnapped and flogged four servicemen. This sequence had four effects: it enhanced Irgun's credibility

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101. Quoted Begin, p 221.

102. Sykes, p 359.

and reputation for irresistibility, it undermined respect for authority, by concentrating public attention upon the 'medieval punishment'[103] of caning the offences of murder and robbery were overlooked, and it brought to an end the use of corporal punishment.

Irgun and Stern were also anxious to save from death sentences members who had been convicted of murder. No doubt they felt that, if the deterrent effect of capital punishment could be removed, their activists would feel able to take even greater risks. Imprisonment had little impact, since all concerned in the underground struggle were confident that in a final settlement all prisoners would be released. The method employed was blackmail. Whenever Irgunists were under sentence of death the organisation would endeavour to kidnap administrators or servicemen as hostages. Against this, the British had to choose between giving way to the Blackmail, with obvious consequences, and forfeiting innocent lives. The course chosen seemed to be dictated by the pressures of the moment rather than principle, swerving between compromise and rigidity. Several Irgunists were executed, and eventually, in July 1947, two hostages were murdered and their bodies booby-trapped. The Irgun's announcement, translated into English, is worth reproducing in full, as it illustrates the contortions into which Begin's propaganda assumptions had led him, in order to justify what by any normal standards would be seen as a brutal act of indiscriminate revenge.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The two British spies, MARTIN and PAICE, who were under arrest by the Underground since 12 July 1947, have been put on trial, following the enquiry into their criminal anti-Hebrew activities.

MARTIN and PAICE have been accused of the following crimes:

1. Illegal entry into our homeland.

2. Membership of the British criminal-terrorist organisation known as "British Army of Occupation in Palestine" which is responsible:

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103. Quoted Wilson, p 88.

for depriving our people of the right to live;

for cruel, oppressive acts;

for tortures;

for the murder of men, women and children;

for the murder of prisoners of war;

and for the deportation of Hebrew citizens from their country and homeland.

3. Illegal possession of arms, intended for the enforcement of oppression and despotism.

4. Anti-Jewish spying, disguised in civilian clothes.

5. Conspiring against the Hebrew Underground, its soldiers, bases and arms, the arms of freedom.

The court has found the two guilty of all charges and sentenced them to die by hanging on their necks until their soul would leave them.

The request of the condemned men for clemency has been rejected.

The sentence has been carried out.

The hanging of the two British spies is not a retaliatory act for the murder of Hebrew prisoners of war, but it is an ordinary legal action of the court of the Underground which has sentenced and will sentence the criminals who belong to the criminal Nazi-British Army of Occupation.

We shall revenge the blood of the prisoners of war who have been murdered by actions of war against the enemy, by blows which we shall inflict on his head.

The Court of Irgun Zwai Leumi,
In Eretz Israel. 104

The pretence at being belligerents is commonly adopted by insurgents, although for propaganda purposes only. The practical implications of belligerent status upon an underground guerrilla force would be disastrous. Begin's propaganda fantasies went one step further by combining his claim of belligerent rights for the Irgun with a

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104. Quoted Wilson, pp 133-134. For a description of the hangings, which were carried out by Paglin personally, see J Bowyer Bell (ii) Terror out of Zion (New York, 1977), pp 236-239.

denial of such rights to the British. Fantastic or not, these assumptions were seldom questioned by audiences in such 'neutral' countries as America, and served to justify barbaric acts. It hardly has to be added that for those Irgunists who were executed, martyrdom was switched on like a searchlight.

The essential prize to be defended by any Government threatened by insurgency is the legitimacy of the regime. This becomes, in a sense, the main propaganda assumption of the authorities. Its protection depends less upon public relations exercises as upon the whole conduct of administration and security operations. In Palestine the Administration went far towards surrendering its claim to legitimacy, and losing its credibility, by swerving between appeasement and punishment, and by appearing to sway before terrorist threats. The venture into unlawful counter-terrorism and various utterances by senior officers contributed to this process. The chief strength of the Administration in presentational terms lay in the quality and behaviour of its security forces, particularly the Army, whose members gave remarkably few genuine propaganda opportunities to the Zionists, who therefore found it necessary to invent stories, fake injuries[105] and engineer confrontations.

The Army in Palestine appreciated some of the dangers of hostile propaganda, but was equipped neither by training nor organisation to counter it. The need for speedy and accurate passing of information was understood, but no apparatus existed to make really good use of it. The headquarters in Jerusalem in December 1945 issued an instruction[106] on press relations. This confirmed the right of all reporters holding official press cards to move freely in the Mandate, and to report as they wished. Army transport was to be provided for this purpose. Each divisional and brigade headquarters was to appoint a public relations officer. Apart from these specialists, no officer or soldier was to give an interview with the press. The importance of speedy reporting of operations was stressed by both divisional

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105. See article by Colin Mitchell, Sunday Express, (London, 3 November 1968), pp 8-9.

106. British Troops in Palestine and Transjordan Operations Instruction No 56, 31 December 1945. PRO. WO 169/19685.

headquarters. 6th Airborne Division ordered that 'the importance of rapid information from the political point of view will be impressed upon all commanders and staff. Speed, accuracy and, above all, "Beat Reuters" '.[107] 1st Infantry Division pointed to the dangers of deliberate misreporting by committed journalists and mentioned how Reuters must have been tipped off by the Stern group in order to get their first report of the car park murders on the line 20 minutes after the attack began. 'It is the first "hot news" that captures the headlines', the instruction warned. 'The agencies are concerned primarily with the rapid passing of information and not its accuracy. They will use the first story they get.'[108]

Outside the Arab and Islamic worlds, press coverage of Palestine, influenced by the Zionist propaganda organisation, gradually became more and more pro-Jewish, and increasingly critical of Britain. The Soviet Union supported Zionism, presumably because this movement seemed capable of ejecting Britain from the Palestine base and of creating an unstable situation throughout the Near and Middle East. Only in Britain were newspapers generally opposed to Zionist ambitions, persuasive propaganda being incompatible with murder. 'The British Press was perhaps a little slow in the early stages in presenting a true picture of the problems which the Army was facing', wrote the Historian to 6th Airborne Division. 'But after a time this was rectified. Thereafter the balanced reports produced by the majority of British papers were one of the few compensations to the troops in their unpleasant work.'[109]

Sympathy and understanding are useful assets, but they are no substitute for confidence. As the months went by with no signs of a political solution, with no evidence that the authorities had any means to stem the rising tide of violence in Palestine, and with mounting costs in lives, money and international respect, the British news media questioned the wisdom of continuing the Mandate. On 2 March 1947,

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107. 6th Airborne Division Operations Instruction No 4, 17 October, 1945. PRO WO 169/19685.

108. 1st Infantry Division letter 'Publicity' 8 May 1946. PRO. WO 169/19685.

109. Wilson, p 90.

one month after Britain had referred the problem to the UN, the Sunday Express reacted to fresh violence with the headline 'Govern or Get Out! ' At this stage the British Government was still half hoping for a UN plan that would leave Britain in effective control of the Mandate. Leverage from within, combined with leverage from the international community, helped put an end to such hopes.

British efforts to counter Zionist propaganda in the United States were dismally ineffective. As early as November 1945 the Palestine High Commissioner telegraphed to the Colonial Secretary complaining that British policy would suffer unless the Government took vigorous steps to remedy the situation. The Government took no such steps, being content simply to repeat the telegram to Washington. The British Ambassador in the US did nothing either, and his reply said that he felt that misrepresentations were not as widespread as they might have been and, in any case, the few papers which violently misrepresented the British case were incorrigible.[110] It was evidently beneath the dignity or beyond the competence of His Majesty's Foreign Service to indulge in the necessary task of countering the lies and slanders that were damaging the National interest. Instead, Embassy staff relied upon the official complaint as their only means of defence. After Bergson inserted his Irgun fund-raising piece in PM they sent an aide memoire to the State Department. This stressed the undesirable outcome of such fund-raising in support of terrorism, pointed to the recent verbal attacks upon such activities by the Inner Zionist Council, and requested a reply to this and earlier memoires. In London a Foreign Office official thought the aide memoire 'a lamentably weak document', and went on: 'One would have thought that as three previous protests have gone unanswered, we could ... point out that the financing of rebellion on the territory of a friendly power was just the least bit steep?'.[111] We may conclude that the 'lamentably weak document' reflected a lamentably weak policy in countering hostile propaganda, and for this the Foreign Office, as well as its Washington outpost, was vulnerable to criticism.

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110. PRO File 75156/151A, 1945, Pt II CO 733/456.

111. PRO File E 12099, Palestine and Transjordan FO 371/52571.

Throughout the last years of the Mandate the Army and the Palestine Administration were aware of what was being said by the Zionist propagandists. War diaries and Colonial Office telegrams recorded themes and lines and methods of dissemination. Yet in their efforts to contain the situation it never seems to have occurred to political or military leaders that this propaganda and the leverage it exerted were the war-winning weapons of Zionism, and that the violence on the streets and in the orange groves was there mainly in a supporting role. Leaflets and broadcasts were studied by the British as possible intelligence sources but their messages were largely ignored. The significance of the 'invisible lifebelt', the need to avoid being led into humiliating situations, the strategy of leverage itself - all these ought to have occupied the minds of commanders and staffs at least as much as road blocks and searches. When on 13 January 1947 the Chiefs-of-Staff considered the Government's proposal to refer the problem, Field-Marshal Montgomery, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, thought it 'imprudent that we should, by submitting the Palestine case to the UNO, take the risk of having to evacuate the whole of our forces from that area'.[112] Evidently the Chiefs were the last to be affected by the 'Asset-to-Liability-Shift', although how Palestine could any longer be seen as a strategic asset is difficult to understand. The implication is that from their Chief downwards the Army thought in terms of countering growing insurgency by an ever increasing military response. Both official and extremist Jews knew that such a reaction, properly presented to world opinion, could only hasten their political victory. It was Zionist understanding of the strategy of leverage coupled with Britain's blindness in this area that settled the outcome.

Conclusion

Britain's decision to refer the Mandate to the UN marked the end of Phase I of Zionist strategy. Phase II would involve persuading the UN Special Committee to recommend a solution favourable to the Jews, Phase III would require UN endorsement of such a scheme and Phase IV would imply the establishment and defence of the new State of Israel.

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112. Minutes, Chiefs of Staff (47) 9th Meeting, 13 January 1947.

This study is mainly concerned with Phase I and with the British decision not to implement the UN scheme. We may note in passing that the seduction of the UN Special Committee was made relatively easy by Arab reluctance to argue their case, and by the Zionist propaganda already soaked up by Committee members during the long campaign to gain international support and to discredit Britain, and that the same propaganda, aided in the Soviet Union by a subtle political campaign, served to obtain UN approval.[113] During Phases II and III the Irgun and Stern continued and intensified their violence and, through it, leverage against the British, thus ensuring that Britain would refuse to implement the UN scheme and instead would quit. The final Phase relied upon Jewish martial prowess. Integration propaganda[114] had prepared the Yishuv and its soldiers for this test and the discipline and valour that were shown proved its effectiveness.

'Constructive Warfare' as originally envisaged by the Jewish Agency and Haganah failed, being impossible to implement in alliance with extremists who rejected the strategy and made it unworkable. When apologists for the Irgun claim that it was Begin's strategy of violent coercion and of leverage that forced Britain first to refer the problem to the UN and later to quit, they may be right. It should not necessarily be accepted, however, that this was the only path open to Zionism, or that it was the best. Extremism invites an extreme response, as the Arabs have subsequently shown. Furthermore, it was more by Jewish luck than good judgement that Britain, faced with extremist violence, held on to the Mandate as long as she did. Had she quit earlier, the outcome of Phase IV would almost certainly have been in the Arabs' favour.

Both strategies relied on propaganda to arouse world opinion and both depended in various ways on British restraint. The Agency hoped to generate sympathy and admiration and to persuade Britain that her policy was unjust and morally insupportable. The Irgun set out to fabricate worldwide hatred of Britain and to convince the British that their policy was costly, futile and politically insupportable. Agency

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113. See Arnold Krammer 'Soviet Motives in the Partition of Palestine 1947-48' in Journal of Palestine Studies. Winter 1973 edition, pp 102-119.

114. See p 18.

pre-propaganda slid in the Irgun's direction during World War II, and this made restraint much more difficult afterwards. It may also have hardened British attitudes. Some aspects of 'Constructive Warfare' such as the Tel Aviv riots were ill suited to that strategy, since they created tensions that could only benefit an all-out campaign of terror, which the Agency and Haganah had rejected. Out of this muddle a compromise seems to have emerged in which the Official Zionist movement continued outwardly to strive towards a political settlement while at the same time covertly tolerating the extremists' campaign of coercion. Yigal Allon acknowledges that these groups 'contributed their share to the overall pressure that finally led to the withdrawal of the British'.[115] This balanced opinion contrasts with Begin's view of the Irgun:

> Few against the many, the weak against the strong. Hounded, isolated, forsaken, abandoned ... Their life was struggle; their death heroism; their sacrifice sacred; their memory eternal. [116]

The ironic fact that Begin and his supporters never admit to is that it was the Jewish Agency, their bête noire, that made the Irgun's and Stern's campaigns possible. In his 1944 public call to revolt Begin had appealed to the Yishuv: 'Build a protecting wall around your fighting youth. Do not foresake them ... ' [117] After 1945 the Agency allowed this wall to stand.

Discussion

The Zionist campaign against Britain illustrated both the power and the dangers of revolutionary propaganda. Unchecked, it ceased to be an instrument of policy and became instead the blind creator of policy. Once the genie of hatred had been let out of the bottle, what J Bowyer Bell calls 'the cautious, well-reasoned, eminently rational strategy of the legitimate institutions'[118] was doomed to failure.

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115. Allon, p 29.
116. Begin, pp 379-380.
117. Begin, p 43.
118. Bell (i), p 70.

In support of revolution per se, and of the Irgun and Stern variety in particular, Zionist propaganda was powerful and effective. Both wings used the emotional message style, and the message depended for its effectiveness upon events in or en route to Palestine being appropriately amplified and interpreted. Inside Palestine the Zionist message provided strong integration propaganda which could as necessary be turned into agitation propaganda. Within the ranks of those committed to the struggle propaganda provided motive, justification and congratulation, and was effective. Against 'neutrals' it was generally strong, being assisted by Jews of the Diaspora who provided organisational bases inside the target communities. Messages directed at 'enemies' made less impression, except in terms of leverage. Jewish voices in Britain were silenced by shame over extremist actions; in Arab audiences there was no effective Jewish group to repeat the themes in forms that might make them acceptable.

The Irgun campaign deserves study as a classic example of leverage warfare. By the 'Asset-to-Liability-Shift' Begin made the British public anxious to be rid of the Palestine commitment, at almost any price. While he was creating this shift of opinion he used what might be termed 'survival propaganda' to deter harsh security force responses. Irgun propaganda overseas, particularly in America, demonstrated how far sophisticated audiences can be led down the road to fantasy by the ruthless superimposition of facts upon boldly stated assumptions.

Zionist propaganda themes included righteousness, allegiance, moral certainty, terror, the 'counter-productivity' of security measures and security force incompetence, martyrdom and the glorification of heroes, the praise of violence, the justification of the rebel violence and hence the need of 'special status', guilt transfer, the legitimacy of the cause and its inevitable victory, credibility of the revolt, cost and futility of resistance and, overshadowing all, hatred.

For Britain the main lesson was the impossibility of conducting any sort of campaign, politic-l, military or psychological, without forward policy, and events in Palestine showed that in a revolutionary situation delay usually aggravates the problem. These political

aspects may have concealed the equally important counter-insurgency lessons that pointed to the need for a government faced by rebellion to possess an effective counter-propaganda apparatus and the political will to use it. Effectiveness and will would depend upon there being a wide understanding of the nature and importance of revolutionary propaganda amongst politicians, administrators, police and military.

CHAPTER V

GUERRE REVOLUTIONNAIRE

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN ALGERIA

The Cult

On 21 July 1954 an armistice was signed in Indo-China that brought French rule in that country to an end. After an eight year struggle during which the Vietminh had adapted for their own purposes the revolutionary theories expounded by Mao Tse-tung, the French had been defeated. In an effort to find new and better ways of countering anti-colonial insurrections in the future, a number of French army officers who had fought in Indo-China formulated a doctrine which they called guerre revolutionnaire.[1]

The doctrine related to subversive warfare within a state, and it held that in order to seize power, the revolutionaries must enlist 'the active help of the physically and morally conquered population',[2] and combine destructive with constructive techniques according to a definite procedure. Long before armed force is used against the security forces or other government targets, the insurgents must use propaganda, agitation and organisation amongst part, at least, of the civilian population to provide secure 'bases', political, financial and manpower support, an intelligence network, and a climate of opinion favourable to revolt. Guerre révolutionnaire then expounded principles and tactics for defeating revolution. The destruction of enemy formed units was seen as a necessary preliminary, but purely military actions, it was argued, could never be relied upon to end the revolt. The security force measures needed to be guided as much by political and psychological considerations as by military ones. The tactics of the guerilla had to be turned against him: the civilian population had to be induced to play an active part in the government's

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1. The writer's chief source on the subject of Guerre Revolutionnaire is Peter Paret French Revolutionary Warfare from Indo-China to Algeria (London, 1964). The quotations in notes 3, 39 and 52 below are taken from this book.

2. 'Ximenes' 'La Guerre révolutionnaire et ses données fondamentales' in Revue Militaire d'Information, February-March, 1957, p 8.

fight. If this was impossible to achieve, resettlement must deny support to the enemy. Captured rebels had to be 're-educated' to rid them of their mistaken ideology.

Much of this doctrine had already been applied by other nations coping with insurgency. The British in Malaya co-ordinated their political, military and psychological action against the communist revolutionaries to good effect. They resettled civilians and deprived the rebels of support. They outfought the jungle bandits. Many communists were induced to surrender and then led raids against their erstwhile comrades. Finally, the British Government seized the political initiative by offering the country independence provided the communist threat was first overcome. The Malays responded and contributed handsomely to the final outcome.[3] But whereas the British had stumbled upon their technique in their characteristically pragmatic manner, the French officers who espoused guerre révolutionnaire cultivated it with almost religious fervour. The doctrine was to them more than just a tactical method, it was an ethical and patriotic duty - a cult.

Guerre révolutionnaire did not confine its influence to the area of direct conflict. Colonel Roger Trinquier insisted that 'the Sine Qua Non of victory in modern warfare is the unconditional support of the population'.[4] For the doctrine's advocates this meant the whole population of France as well as the people in the combat zone. Thus the army would take upon itself the task of mustering home-front support for its overseas counter-insurgency campaigns, support which it felt had been fatally lacking during the Indo-China struggle. Sustained popular favour often requires an ideological commitment, and the final step carrying guerre révolutionnaire into the heart of French politics might be the army's attempt to evolve ideological centrepieces for its campaigns of counter-insurgency, more powerful than those which inspired rebellion.

This new military cult was still in its infancy, and had been embraced only by a small but influential minority of French Army

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3. See Richard Clutterbuck (i) The Long, Long War (New York, 1966).
4. Roger Trinquier Modern Warfare (London, 1964), p 7.

officers, when an occasion for it to be tested arose. On the night of 31 October 1954, only three months after the armistice in the East, rebellion broke out in Algeria. The next morning the Cairo propaganda radio station 'Voice of the Arabs' announced:

> Brothers! Today Algeria launched her sublime struggle for freedom and for Islam. Today - November 1 1954 - Algeria has once again begun to live with honour. A powerful élite of the sons of Algeria have begun the struggle to rid themselves of the tyranny of French imperialism. 5

This chapter looks at the role of propaganda in the Algerian war, with particular reference to the cult of guerre révolutionnaire with its emphasis upon psychological counter-measures.

Outline of the Algerian War

The French ruled Algeria from 1830, and from the earliest days they made determined efforts to colonise the territory with French settlers or, when insufficient Frenchmen were available, with Spanish, Maltese and Corsicans. These 'colons' were given the best land and quickly became an economic, social and political élite. From 1833 onwards various ordinances proclaimed that Algeria was to be considered as part of Metropolitan France. This notion of integration distinguished Algeria from other French (or for that matter European) colonial possessions. Generations of Frenchmen were educated to believe that Algeria was a part of France. Such a belief excluded any possibility of Algerian independence and denied the existence of Algerian nationality. To ensure an indefinite future for such an arrangement, France also needed to convince Algerians that their country was a part of France. If both parties believed in integration there need be no problem. In this they failed. On the one hand the French themselves paid lip service to the notion of integration while ruling Algeria pretty much as if it were a colony. On the other, the Algerian Muslim masses were never won over to full acceptance that their country was a part of France. Because inequalities between Muslims and Europeans abounded, integration was always an empty theory:

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5. Quoted Arslan Humbaraci Algeria: A Revolution that Failed (London, 1966), p 34.

> Wretchedly poor themselves, the (Algerian) Muslims saw wealthy Europeans daily. A political gap paralleled this economic discrepancy as one European vote equalled as many as eight Muslim ballots. The natives could not be expected to accept their inferior status indefinitely, and Algerian leaders had long demanded that their people be given equality with the French. While there existed an inherent danger of revolution in such an unjust society, few men saw the problem clearly. Virtually no Europeans admitted the possibility of rebellion. 6

For more than a hundred years the French authorities could afford not to care whether Algerians believed in integration or not. Heresy could be ignored or stifled.

Disbelief became dangerous when fanned by Arab nationalism, by resentment at Muslim living standards against those enjoyed by the colons, and by an emerging awareness of Algerian national identity. Nevertheless Muslim political parties seeking reforms quarrelled amongst themselves and until 1954 the French had little difficulty dividing or crushing dissent. The organisation that inspired the rebellion that began on the last night of October of that year was the Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front), the FLN, and the guerilla soldiers who carried out the attacks styled themselves the Armée de Libération Nationale (Army of National Liberation), the ALN. The ALN was the military wing of the political movement FLN, and, in theory at least, acted on orders from Cairo, where the FLN 'External Delegation' initially established its headquarters. In practice it was the military rebel leaders who tended to dominate the Movement at all levels. The choice of the term 'front' was in itself a deliberate attempt by the revolutionaries to create a mystique which would embody the aspirations of all Muslim Algerians, while at the same time obliterating the disunited nationalist past.

In apparent disregard of the sequence of revolutionary phases envisaged by the authors of guerre révolutionnaire, the ALN omitted completely the preparatory programme in which, according to that

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6. The writer's chief source on FLN-ALN policy, organisation and methods is Alf Andrew Heggoy Insurgency and Counter-insurgency in Algeria (Bloomington, USA, 1972). This quote p 72. The quotations in notes 20, 23, 29, 30, 50 and 51 below are taken from this book.

doctrine, rebels create conditions essential to success in later violent phases. The tasks of propaganda, agitation and organisation amongst the population in the base areas, the 'mobilisation of the masses', the development of recruiting, financial and logistics support, and the setting up of an intelligence network, were all left to be tackled after the outbreak of guerrilla warfare. Action, not words, was to rally the people, and French reaction was relied upon to strengthen rather than reduce popular support for the revolution. Thus French counter-intelligence was denied the opportunity to identify the seeds of rebellion before the first sprouts of violence appeared above the ground.

Although the Algerian nationalists surprised the French and 'broke the rules' by an abrupt violent beginning of revolution, their strategy was in other respects fashioned after the example of Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh. FLN leaders did not imagine that French opinion, for so long educated to think in terms of Algérie Française, could be swung in favour of Algerian independence by a purely terroristic campaign. Nor did they consider France vulnerable to 'leverage'. Both terror and international pressure would have important supporting roles in FLN strategy, but victory would come as a result of armed force. The 'War of National Liberation' would progress from an early 'survival' phase through 'protracted' and 'mobile' periods, before the final 'conventional' confrontation on the Dien Bien Phu model. This strategy failed because the French, benefiting from the lessons of Indo-China, many of which were embodied in guerre révolutionnaire, mounted what was in many respects a wonderfully successful counter-insurgency campaign. However, in the course of fighting their doomed war to defeat the French army, the FLN-ALN slowly became aware that although they could not win in the manner originally intended, they might nevertheless convince the French that the cost of defending Algeria against Algerians was too great to be borne indefinitely. Part of this cost was the political side-effects of the doctrine of guerre révolutionnaire.

Between November 1954 and about March 1956 the revolution was in its 'survival' stage. The guerrillas harrassed the French and terrorised Algerians into supporting the revolt, or, at least, into withholding assistance from the French. The ALN achieved dominance in its mountainous base areas and learnt to survive in the face of

French security force counter-measures. During the final months of this phase the FLN-ALN launched an effective 'hearts and minds' campaign amongst rural Muslims, which succeeded in reinforcing the terrorist hold over the population by an ideological commitment. Religious leaders declared in favour of the revolt, thus strengthening the secular appeal of national independence with the moral force and binding discipline of Islamic faith. Throughout this early period the French army was finding its feet and building up strength. Its response was insufficiently effective to snuff out the spark of revolution.

The delivery to the ALN of modern Czechoslovak weapons enabled the rebels to move into 'protracted guerrilla warfare' in April 1956, a phase which lasted until about December 1957. The Anglo-French 'Suez' adventure of November 1956 caused a temporary diversion of French effort from Algeria to Egypt, but nevertheless the army was reasonably successful in countering ALN tactics by the system known as quadrillage. This placed all cities, towns and villages under military garrison, the garrisons diminishing in strength according to the size of population, in order to bring the army into 'contact' across the entire 'front'. The system tied up vast numbers of troops, leaving rather too few for the necessary mobile operations against ALN forces in the mountains, but it did effectively hamper the ALN 'oil spot' tactics which were intended to extend rebel-controlled territory. Battles occurred continually, often on a considerable scale. By October 1957, 30,000 ALN had been killed. At that time there were more than 400,000 French troops in Algeria. The policy of removing people from areas under rebel domination had resulted in 364,000 Muslim civilians being housed in 'regroupment centres'.[7] The ALN moved into Algiers and by terror attacks virtually brought that city to its knees. The French in February 1957 ordered General Massu with his 10th Parachute Division to restore order, a task that was carried out with grim efficiency. On 24 September 1957 the ALN in Algiers

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7. See Edgar O'Ballance The Algerian Insurrection 1954-1962 (London, 1967), Chapters 3 and 4. (O'Ballance provides a useful account that concentrates upon the military aspects of the struggle.)

virtually surrendered, abandoning their urban campaign. The shooting war was going badly for the Algerian nationalists.[8]

Nevertheless they stuck to the Maoist formula, expanded the size of their formed units, and attempted to move into Phase III - 'mobile warfare'. This ended in failure only six months later, when the ALN was forced to return to the 'protracted' stage. By now the neighbouring states Morocco and Tunisia, recently independent of French colonial rule, were providing the rebel army with safe havens. Beyond both boundaries the ALN established training and logistic bases and built up the large units that were intended one day to force the French army to surrender. The French, however, took steps to block this design by constructing mined and electrified barriers along the borders. Sizeable battles, costing hundreds of rebel lives, raged when the revolutionary forces attempted to break through these barriers. 'Mobile warfare' could not be sustained in the face of a well-trained, determined French army, equipped with armoured vehicles and helicopters and the mobility and fire-power that these provide. With lowered morale, the ALN re-organised into smaller units and returned to protracted guerrilla warfare. By now the number of civilians in regroupment centres had risen to 485,000.

On 1 June 1958 General de Gaulle returned to power in France. Before the end of the year he appointed a new commander-in-chief in Algeria - General Challe. Challe instituted changes in strategy aimed at eliminating the ALN rather than simply containing the rebellion as had been the case under 'quadrillage'. The 'Challe Plan' released a proportion of garrison troops from their static role so as to increase the mobile striking forces. These were to destroy the FLN units operating inside Algeria and to root out the insurgent political and administrative organisation 'OPA' in the towns and villages. The striking forces would be assisted by élite commandos de chasse, each about 100 strong, whose role was to track down and observe the rebel units. This special surveillance would direct the striking forces to best effect. Meanwhile the frontier

8. See Alistair Horne A Savage War of Peace, Algeria 1954-1962 (London, 1977), Chapters 9 and 10. (Horne deals in detail with all aspects, particularly the political.)

defences were to be strengthened so as to exclude from the struggle the growing number of ALN units being formed and trained in Morocco and Tunisia.

Against the ALN proper, the Challe Plan was successful. All through 1959 the rebel units were reduced in number and effectiveness, so that by the end of the year the guerrillas were once again in a struggle for 'survival'. The ALN was at times losing 500 men per day.[9] Yet during 1959 the ALN was able to re-establish itself in Algiers and to bring terrorism back to the city. Against the nationwide FLN political infrastructure the Challe Plan had only limited success. Had it been launched early in 1955, before the FLN-ALN propaganda and the nature of the struggle itself had hardened popular support for the rebellion, the Plan's full ambitions might have been achieved. As it was, it left the FLN-ALN gravely weakened militarily, but with its political strength at home and overseas still growing. It was this fact that convinced de Gaulle of the need for a political settlement based on the right of self-determination, and fighting died down in mid-1960 as both sides awaited the outcome of negotiations. These were long and drawn out, and it was spring 1961 before representatives of the two sides met at Evian, and another year before agreement was reached. On 3 July 1962 the French High Commissioner handed over power to the Algerian Executive.

The Algerian war was costly and brutal. Mr Horne quotes French official sources which speak of 17,456 military dead, about 3,000 European civilians killed, 141,000 male Muslim combatants killed by security forces, 12,000 members of the FLN liquidated in internal purges, 16,000 Muslims murdered by the FLN plus another 50,000 abducted and presumably killed. On top of these figures there were another 4,300 Algerians killed by the FLN or its rivals in metropolitan France during the course of the war, and a far higher number, variously estimated between 30,000 and 150,000, who were the victims of massacres after the French withdrew from Algeria. These last were the unfortunates who had been loyal to France in the struggle, against whom the victors unleashed the utmost cruelty.[10] At least 1.8 million Muslims were

9. O'Ballance, p 135.

10. Horne, p 538.

uprooted from their homes or were forced to leave them because of the fighting. Terror tactics struck indiscriminately, and with a degree of savagery far surpassing anything seen in our earlier studies. When the colons in 1961 hit back wildly with their own terrorist organisation, the OAS, their ruthlessness was of the same order. In their struggle to obtain information the French police and army's interrogation methods sometimes slipped into the dark world of torture.

FLN-ALN Propaganda

The first tract issued by the ALN appeared on 1 November 1954 and read as follows:

> Algerian people:
>
> Reflect on our humiliating, colonized condition. Under colonialism, justice, democracy and equality are but bait and dupery. To these misfortunes must be added the bankruptcy of the parties claiming to defend you. Side by side with our brothers in the east and to the west, who are dying that their fatherlands may live, we call upon you to reconquer your freedom at the price of your blood.
>
> Organise your action beside the Forces of Liberation, to which you must give aid, comfort and protection. To take no interest in the struggle is a crime; to oppose this action is treason.
>
> God is with the fighters of just causes, and no force can stop them now, save glorious death or National Liberation.
>
> Long live the Army of Liberation!
>
> Long live independent Algeria! [11]

This call to arms was addressed to Algerian Muslims, 'friends', and it contained the propaganda themes of mass mobilisation. These were 'righteousness of the cause', 'hatred of the enemy', 'join us in the heroic, morally sound struggle where violence is glorious and death brings martyrdom' and 'oppose us and you die'. This mixture of heroic appeal and terroristic threat enabled the FLN, which started the revolt unknown and unsupported, to seize control of the Algerian masses and

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11. Quoted Michael K Clark Algeria in Turmoil (New York, 1966), p 111.

eventually make Algeria ungovernable by the French by any means acceptable to French and international opinion.

The largely apolitical and apathetic Muslim villagers never would have provided the necessary support had the FLN not used terror. Throat cuttings, mutilations, executions of hostages, extortion of money or goods; these, as much as propaganda appeals, rallied the ranks. In any reasonably well-adjusted society such behaviour might be expected to be wholly counter-productive. The resort to terror would discredit its originators, besides demonstrating the inadequacy of the revolutionary ideology. However, French Algeria was less than well-adjusted socially. In the mountain areas chosen for the initial ALN bases French administration had never been much more than a theory. Thus the villagers had no authority to whom to appeal for help and were obliged to serve the rebels whether they liked it or not. Furthermore, although apolitical and apathetic, Muslims had many reasons for disliking French rule. Terror was needed to spur them into committing themselves but, once committed, motives more positive than self-preservation kept them going. By the time the FLN-ALN expanded their areas of influence to towns and villages where their authority and propaganda were directly challenged by French equivalents, rebel esteem was such that terror was needed more as a means of enforcing discipline than as the trigger to set off revolutionary activity. Moreover by that time the FLN's guerrilla attacks against the French had brought the French security forces into action and, inevitably, much of what these forces had done was seen by Muslims as oppressive. Primarily intended as blows in a war to defeat the French militarily, ALN attacks were also important as 'propaganda of the deed', freeing Muslims from a sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the French, rebuilding national pride, and inspiring confidence in final victory. Words and deeds were inextricably committed to the struggle.

Terrorism was used from the outset not only as a means of enforcing internal discipline, but as a device to force the pace towards total polarisation. Besides the normal ambition associated with such action, of driving the government to over-react and thus alienate the masses, the FLN were concerned to discredit and destroy all French and Muslim leaders who stood for moderation and compromise. This might be achieved if both communities came to view each other as barbaric

enemies. The Phil ippeville massacres of August 1955 set this trend in motion.

> The peak of horror was reached at Ain-Abid, twenty-four miles east of Constantine, and at El-Halia, a small pyrite mining centre close to Philippeville ... The attackers went from house to house mercilessly slaughtering all the occupants regardless of sex or age, and egged on by Muslim women with their eerie you-you chanting ... an entire pied noir (colon) family called Mello perished atrociously: a seventythree year old grandmother and eleven year old daughter, the father killed in his bed, with his arms and legs hacked off. The mother had been disembowelled, her five day old baby slashed to death and replaced in her opened womb ... The Arab children, wild with enthusiasm - to them it was a great holiday - rushed about yelling among the grown-ups. They finished off the dying. [12]

This horror had its desired effect. A French paratrooper recalled:

> We opened fire into the thick of them, at random. Then as we moved on and found more bodies our company commanders finally gave us the order to shoot down every Arab we met. You should have seen the result ... [13]

The result, in mathematical terms, was 123 killed by the FLN-led mob, of whom 71 were Europeans, and, by French accounts, 1,273 dead 'insurgents'. The FLN have claimed that as many as 12,000 Muslims died in the backlash. In political terms, 'A sombre harvest of hatred sprouted in the bloodshed. Terror dominated minds. Far from being brought together by the ordeal, human beings were going to divide themselves and tear themselves to pieces'.[14] The tactics of terror had far outreached the doctrine taught by Carlos Marighella.[15] The propaganda effect within the Muslim population was reinforced by organisation and discipline.

From 1 November 1954 onwards the insurgents developed their control by a combination of pragmatism, Muslim proletarian party organisations, and methodology borrowed from the communists.[16] The

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12. Horne, pp 120-121.
13. Quoted Horne, p 121.
14. Jacques Soustelle, Governor-General at the time, quoted Horne, pp 122-123.
15. See p 86.
16. Heggoy, p 108.

territorial units were, in descending order, Wilaya (provinces), zones, regions, sectors, douars and fractions. Each wilaya was ruled by a rebel 'colonel', who enjoyed supreme military and political authority over the FLN-ALN within the province. Although nominally subordinate to the External Delegation in Cairo, these colonels had wide discretion in the direction of the revolt. At each level the commander was supported by staffs responsible for political affairs including propaganda, for military operations, and for liaison and intelligence. ALN military units adopted French organisation, so far as the conditions of battle permitted. These combatants were supported by local auxiliaries of irregulars, the mousseblin, and by the Political and Administrative Organisation (OPA).

Horne describes how, at an early stage in the revolution, it became a customary initiation ritual for a new recruit to be made to kill a designated Muslim 'traitor' or French official, in the company of a 'shadow' who would despatch the recruit himself should he show any sign of flinching.[17] The Martiniquais, Frantz Fanon, who committed himself to the FLN cause, provided tortuous intellectual justification for such policies, seeing them as a cleansing process. He and other ideologues helped the FLN escape some at least of the international opprobrium that their cruel methods may have merited.

Politics and propaganda were to all intents and purposes one and the same thing, so far as the FLN-ALN inside Algeria were concerned. The political affairs officer at each level of command was responsible for keeping alive the revolutionary faith in each militant. He was also concerned with the ideological discipline of the entire Muslim population of his territory. His means for accomplishing the second task was the OPA. It was the primary duty of the OPA cells to undermine the French administration at every level, gradually replacing it with officials and institutions of the revolutionary party, the tentacles of 'alternative government'. Each cell operated under the authority of a committee of three composed of a president, a political assistant, and an administrative assistant. The political assistant was in charge of the local FLN organisation, popular education and psychological action, and was often

17. Horne, p 134.

aided by three other officials in charge of security, the policing of the civilian population, and supply. FLN party members were classified according to their leaders' assessment of their zeal and reliability. Those who could be depended upon to do the party's bidding without question were termed 'militants'; the less devoted, regular attenders were 'adherents'; those who only paid their dues were 'sympathisers'. Most of the militants served as irregulars in the mousseblin or fida'iyin.

The fida'iyin corresponded almost exactly to the assassins of medieval Persia. Sworn to die for the cause, they welcomed desperate missions and were employed to kill selected enemies of the revolution, whether French or Muslim. Algerian victims sometimes received a warning, written on ALN headed and crested paper, inviting immediate adherence to the rebel cause. Those who ignored the threat were then killed and the order of execution, also bearing ALN letterhead and symbol, was left on the victim. In this way the fida'iyin gained a reputation for irresistibility, which spread terror far beyond its chosen victims. The FLN did not in the early stage of the struggle need to win full ideological support from the entire Muslim population; in any community they could operate with the dedicated support of as little as twenty per cent of the people. The remainder could be controlled with ease.[18] To this end the most outspoken Francophiles were murdered. Their followers then fled the country or switched their allegiance, usually with plenty of attendant publicity. The fida'iyin were plain clothes FLN militants, not ALN soldiers. They took orders from the political affairs officers and looked to the OPA for necessary support.

Alf Andrew Heggoy summarised the achievements of the FLN-ALN infrastructure:

> The FLN and the ALN, with their vast and complex chains of institutions at every level, worked steadily for three inter-related goals. For the purposes of the revolutionary struggle, they aimed to subjugate the Algerian masses to the FLN. Education, propaganda, terror and organisation were but the means to conquer the minds of men, and through these men to wear down the French will and power to resist. Second, in order to sustain the struggle, gifts had to be solicited, taxes

18. Heggoy, p 100.

and dues collected. Third, it was necessary psychologically to prepare the population for the war against France and for its role in the future independent state of Algeria. Through the rural and urban cells of the OPA, the local fronts, and the trade unions, the nationalists succeeded in their attempt to gain the loyalty of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in every walk of life. 19

A constant theme of OPA propaganda was 'a bitter reply to the paternalistic racism which all too often had typified the colonial administration. Many tracts attacked those French laws which were ill adapted to Algerian customs and conditions, proposing to replace them with a new revolutionary code'.[20] The exploitation of security force mistakes and weaknesses, so common to revolutionary propaganda, was used to good effect by FLN-ALN. Soon after the outbreak of rebellion the French police seized leaders of an Algerian nationalist political party MTLD, in the mistaken belief that they were behind the violence. 'In an effort to extort confessions of complicity and the names of accomplices in the uprising, the police tortured their innocent prisoners. With their legs and hand bound to long boards behind their backs, the accused men were immersed in bath tubs filled with water until they nearly drowned. After prolonged sessions of this kind many signed confessions, only to deny them when the prisoners were later brought before courts of law.'[21] If there is any act of security forces more counter-productive than torturing terrorists, it is surely the torture of innocents. News of the police methods could not be kept from the press. The French were discredited, the FLN's programme gained relative legitimacy, and many MTLD members hitherto neutral in the struggle decided to join the rebels. When the French army attempted to win back Muslim support it used all available means to spread its message. One method adopted was to paint propaganda slogans on the streets. Those concerned were presumably unaware that, for Muslims, the Arabic script in which the Koran is

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19. Heggoy, p 129.

20. R Eoche-Duval 'Aspects locaux et perspectives de la renovation rurale en Algerie', pp 3-4, Document 3631 (1961) of Centre de Hautes Administratives sur L'Afrique et L'Asie Modern.

21. Heggoy, p 83.

written is traditionally held in high esteem. To walk upon words written in Arabic is to defile them. It thus seemed incredible that the French should have exposed their own words to such treatment. 'Young Algerians stamped on the printed phrases, happily expressing their contempt for the administration.'[22]

When in August 1956 rebel leaders met near Akbou in the Soumman valley inside 'liberated' Algerian territory, much was said on the subject of propaganda. By this date French psychological counter measures were beginning to be felt by the ALN. The first decision, therefore, stressed the need to ensure the safety of guerrilla bases, in order to reduce the number of prisoners taken by the French and 'brain-washed'. The second point insisted that nationalist leaders must always be on hand when security forces 'ravaged' a community. Rebel cadres should nurse and comfort the suffering population, interpret those depredations to the inhabitants, and above all maintain the political pressure of the Front among the local citizens even under the most adverse conditions. In short, the Algerian people had to see the ALN as <u>their</u> army, an army fighting to reconquer their lost dignity and national independence.

A third objective of FLN-ALN propaganda was to contradict the military picture painted by the French publicists. By a constant insistence on the courage and sacrifice of the rebel soldiers, the nationalist press service and political affairs officers hoped to fortify the morale of the masses. Rebel propagandists also had to be ready to attack French claims, while pointing to repressive measures designed, according to the nationalist strategists, to wear down Muslim support for revolution. Most important, all the counter-propaganda of the front was to be based on truth, the cornerstone of political credibility. 'This insistence on truth was itself propaganda, as was the entire (Soumman conference) platform. The disproportionate military advantage of the French forced this reliance on propaganda, a fact the rebels themselves recognised.'[23]

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22. Heggoy, p 207.

23. Jacques Duchemin <u>Histoire du FLN</u> (Paris, 1962), pp 207-212.

In parallel with the FLN's erection of an 'alternative regime' in all Muslim communities, the ALN claimed the right to be regarded, by the French authorities as well as by public opinion generally, as a national army, rather than as insurgents. At the same time that rebels captured by the French demanded prisoner-of-war status, they also availed themselves of all the protection and legal aid which French criminal law allowed. The contradiction worried them not at all; by both methods they were simply continuing their war against France, making propaganda even as they tied up the courts.

Although in the rural areas the FLN relied mainly upon organisation and word-of-mouth propaganda to spread their message, in the cities more sophisticated means were used. This was the era of the newly-produced transister radio, a luxury that few Muslims had been inclined to afford. When, however, the FLN started broadcasts over their clandestine Voix de l'Algérie there was a rush to buy sets. At first the French authorities tried to control sales, then jammed transmissions, but were never for long able to prevent the rebels from reaching mass audiences.[24] At the same time Cairo's 'Voice of the Arabs' and 'Radio Damascus' poured out words inspired by the FLN External Delegation. The rebel newspaper El Moudjahid was published covertly in the Algiers Casbah until discovered by Massu's paratroops. Afterwards it was printed abroad. Printing presses in Egypt and Tunisia turned out all of the rebels' pamphlets, tracts and literature, much of which was introduced into Algeria through friendly consulates. Media such as radio and printed matter could, of course, also contribute to the propaganda struggle on the international front, influencing 'neutrals' and 'enemies' as well as 'friends'.

Chief amongst the Front's foreign friends were Yugoslavia, Egypt and Syria and, when they achieved independence from France in 1956, Tunisia and Morocco, This was the era of President Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism and his widespread and sophisticated propaganda apparatus served the interests of any Arab state struggling for independence. Through Arab diplomacy, the Afro-Asian group of nations, whose representatives conferred at Bandung in 1955, was persuaded to back

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24 Horne, p 133.

Algerian independence. Through the Afro-Asians, the subject was repeatedly brought to the attention of the United Nations. The United States, the Soviet bloc and European nations other than France were all 'neutral' targets, through whom it was hoped that pressure might be applied against France, either directly or through the UN. France was the 'enemy', but that did not mean that the FLN had no friends there.

To these overseas audiences the FLN addressed the themes that Algeria was a colony, and no more a part of Metropolitan France than the moon, that in a world that had rejected colonialism, the Algerians had as much right to their freedom as any other oppressed, occupied nation; that since France refused to recognise this right, the war of national independence was a just war deserving of international support; that once independent, Algeria would seek close and harmonious relations with all countries, including France, out of which commercial interests would flourish. The United States and France were reminded of their own revolutionary histories and invited to draw parallels.

America, still full of naïve idealism as yet untarnished by direct involvement in countering revolution, was a susceptible target. Federation of Labour leader George Meany was moved to protest to France about the arrest in 1956 of Algerian trade union leaders. Liberal-minded US journalists began to report the war 'from the other side', that is to say from the standpoint of ALN propaganda assumptions. By the end of 1957 the State Department itself was unofficially briefing the media that the American function was 'to ease the French out as painlessly as possible'.[25] In Britain the FLN found allies among liberals and socialists. The Observer's articles caused offence in French official circles; Mrs Barbara Castle pushed the theme of the justice of rebellion by explaining that 'terrorism was the result of repression, not its cause',[26] an argument that permits revolutionaries carte-blanche.

Against the 'enemy', France, these messages were overlaid by propaganda designed to sicken the population of the war. Themes included the impossibility of ever defeating the nationalist

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25. Horne, p 244.

26. Horne, p 244.

rebellion, the unending cost in lives and treasure in trying vainly to do so, the cost in international prestige and esteem of being seen as the oppressor and of being accused of torture and other atrocities, the guilt association arising from these accusations, and the practical advantages to France of accepting a realistic, nationalist solution. Liberal opinion and the Left were vulnerable to these arguments and they in turn spread their doubts outwards into the mainstream of French political consciousness. Church groups joined the voices calling for peace once the torture allegations had convinced many Christians that what was being done in the name of France was incompatible with French ideals.

An important stride in the propaganda war was taken by the FLN in September 1958 when it formally declared its External Delegation to be the 'Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria', thus erecting the topmost fabric in the structure of the 'alternative regime'. This step was not taken earlier because rebel leaders needed to be confident that enough nations would recognise such a government for the ploy not to misfire. In the event, their timing was shown to be good.[27] As world opinion shifted towards acceptance of Algeria as a nation, so it moved away from the French notion of integration. Even countries which did not at this stage recognise the Provisional Government, such as the United States, allowed the rebels to open Algerian offices of information in their capital cities, through which the FLN was able to influence the media and indulge in political canvassing.[28] As the war dragged through its fourth year a majority of UN member nations, including some of France's allies, were willing to vote for amended drafts which called upon both parties to negotiate. For France to negotiate with the FLN on any terms agreeable to the rebels was, to all intents and purposes, to surrender.

French Propaganda

When the Algerian revolution was only two weeks old French aircraft flew above the mountainous rebel base areas and dropped leaflets which carried this short message:

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27. See Horne, p 315.

28. See Horne, pp 243-247.

Soon a terrible calamity will befall the rebels.
Then French peace will again reign. 29

The implication for the civilian population was obvious and the thinly veiled threat played upon fears that lingered from 1945. Muslim uprisings immediately after World War II had been crushed with fearful vengeance costing many thousands of Algerian lives. The leaflet represented all too clearly the old style of French government in Algeria - neglect and repression followed, too late, by limited reforms. It represented too the old style of French military response, based on operations to inflict severe punishment on the murderous rebels, a criminal few, after which the troops would return to barracks and the peasants would return to their fields. In this setting, French propaganda needed only to frighten the civilian population away from co-operating with the bandits.

Before the end of 1954 some of the new style French soldiers, the authors and disciples of guerre révolutionnaire, perceived the true nature of the Algerian war and argued that a reinforced army should make 'contact' with the Muslim population, for whose minds the struggle was all about. Paris, refusing to recognise that there was a war in Algeria, put the military under tight civilian control and kept the army from establishing direct contacts with the population. 'The army was thus obliged to operate in a void against an unknown enemy whom the civil administration protected.'[30] Thus the FLN-ALN was able to outlive its most vulnerable period, the 'survival' phase, at the end of which it had created the OPA and gone far towards winning Muslim support by a mixture of terror and propaganda. When eventually Paris did wake up to the reality of the threat posed by the rebels, its reaction was to give too much power to the army. This pleased the colons and the generals but tended to 'militarise' the Algerian situation, a development welcomed by the rebels.

To combat the OPA the French in 1955 developed the Special Administrative Sections (SAS) along the lines of the service des Bureaux Arabes, an instrument of nineteenth century French colonial

29. Quoted Charles-Henri Favrod Le FLN et L'Algérie (Paris, 1962) p 128.

30. Raoul Girardet La Crise militaire francaise: 1954-1962 (Paris, 1964), pp 186-187.

administration in which soldiers combined military duties with civil affairs. The new SAS was designed to overcome a long-standing colonial deficiency, the under-administration of vast areas populated mainly by Arabs and Berbers, and thus establish an institutional infrastructure capable of withstanding the rebels' OPA. The SAS was intended to be temporary, to be replaced by an Algerian-staffed civil administration, but this hand-over never occurred.

Each section was commanded by an officer, usually a subaltern or captain, and at least in the early days these men were carefully selected from volunteers. There was also an assistant, generally a non-commissioned officer or a civilian on contract, who served as secretary-treasurer. A second secretary normally did double duty as an interpreter. The last member of the team was a radio operator. Working in remote and troubled regions, the teams needed protection. This was provided by locally recruited maghzens, detachments of thirty to fifty Algerian volunteers. SAS teams concerned themselves with such projects as local administration, the building and staffing of schools, adult literacy, health, and home defence, all designed to win the respect and loyalty of Muslims and discredit the FLN-ALN, all, in a sense, a political manifestation of 'propaganda of the deed'. Operationally, the SAS provided invaluable intelligence for the troops deployed in the area, and the teams could also recruit native labour and hire transport when required.

At their best, SAS teams were a credit to France, an effective instrument in the struggle for Muslim loyalty, and of genuine benefit to the Algerians among whom they worked. The problems confronting the teams were, first, that they started late, and could never quite undo the work of the OPA; second, that being alien, they laboured under a handicap not shared by the rebels; third, that there were never enough teams to cover the territory infected by subversion; and fourth that in their efforts to expand the SAS, the French were forced to lower standards. In so demanding a role as this, only those with special aptitude and dedication could hope to succeed. Heggoy summarised the work of the SAS:

> In spite of all its limitations the SAS experiment was often a successful counter-insurgency institution. There were, however, many weaknesses in the system. The legal authority of the SAS

> officers was never clearly defined. Success or failure was too dependent on the personal qualities and abilities of the officers, who at their best were benevolent dictators. If they operated in areas inhabited by strong European minorities, they had to be expert diplomats as well. Above all else, they were French soldiers who, in a non-military capacity, had to convince Algerians that France was not the enemy. Moreover, although it was one of the most effective components in the overall French effort of counter-insurgency, the SAS could not solve all the problems inherent in the colonial situation. Finally, after 1958, when the regroupment program and the SAS system were more tightly centralised and placed under the absolute control of the French army, and when assigned officers replaced volunteers, the SAS was lost. 31

Peter Paret saw the SAS, through the prestige associated with their achievements, as performing an important function in maintaining French morale. 'For the Army at large, and for the nation, their achievements balanced the darker sides of the Algerian war. A not unimportant secondary gain was the favourable impression their activities made on Western public opinion. In the otherwise universally unsuccessful French propaganda efforts, the SAS provided the one bright spot.'[32] However he concluded that, for all their tactical successes, the long-term gains by the SAS were questionable. 'With the psychological-warfare services', he wrote 'the SAS shared the difficulty of being engaged in a conflict that was fought along racial lines, of having to win over Muslims and Berbers - whose cultural inferiority few Frenchmen would deny - to a way of life whose presumed superiorities in no way increased its appeal to strangers.'[33]

Although the SAS was created by French soldiers and administrators more concerned with the day-to-day conduct of the war than with counter-insurgency doctrine, the role of these teams did fit neatly into the pattern envisaged in guerre révolutionnaire. This theory was progressively applied to the French military commitment in Algeria as sufficient troops became available and as senior and middle-rank officers converted to the doctrine moved into key command and staff

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31. Heggoy, pp 210-211.

32. Paret, p 51.

33. Paret, pp 51-52.

appointments. Quadrillage was consonant with guerre révolutionnaire, bringing French troops into 'contact' right across the length and breadth of Algeria. Another element was 'regroupement', which emptied areas that could not be satisfactorily controlled by SAS teams or by quadrillage, and concentrated the inhabitants in new communities where it was hoped both their physical and political security could be guaranteed. In February 1955 the first training centre for psychological warfare was set up in Paris, followed by the provisional formation in Algeria of special staff branches to deal with psychological action and psychological warfare, Bureaux Psychologiques. The French used the term 'psychological action' to describe propaganda directed at 'friends' in this case the populations of Metropolitan France and Algeria, other than the rebels, and the French armed services, while psychological warfare was propaganda aimed at 'enemies', the FLN-ALN and their infrastructure. Wide though the interests of the Bureaux were to become, the influencing of 'neutrals' in foreign countries did not feature among their occupations.

The policy of regroupement created the need for additional SAS teams to work in the regroupement centres. The French intention was that the passive and dislocated human beings who had been uprooted by the war should be turned into economically viable groups. Administration, schooling, political indoctrinations and, eventually, instruction in self-defence, were all taken care of by SAS teams. However, success demanded a higher investment of high grade personnel, finances and detailed staff work than the army could possibly afford once the numbers affected by regroupement rose beyond six figures. Peasants removed from their land and forced to live in new, alien misery respond slowly to exhortations from agents of the government that has moved them. They respond far more readily to the agents of an indigenous movement promising freedom and dignity. Nevertheless, at its best, regroupement worked remarkably well. It was defeated by the sheer size of the eventual commitment.[34]

In March 1956 the army opened an instructional centre at Arzew in Oran province where officers taking up appointments in Algeria received a concentrated briefing on the country, its people, history, culture and

34. Horne, p 338, gives the figure as 'over one million' by July 1959.

religion; on Algeria's place in world affairs; on population control, psychological action, morale of own troops and intelligence gathering; and on many other aspects of counter-guerilla warfare. As French conscripts were being drafted to fight in Algeria, many with liberal attitudes inimical to racist and colonial policies, the political education of troops had become an important facet of action psychologique. Robert Lacoste, Resident Minister for Algeria, went as far as to direct that French troops should 'correct misconceptions' about Algeria in their letters home. 'This led to pressures and "guidance" on what the men wrote, from their Commanding Officers.'[35] In April 1956 the Minister of National Defence established the Service d'Action Psychologique et d'Information (SAIP), concerned with press relations. As its first chief was Colonel Lacheroy, author of several articles on counter-insurgency and a high priest of the cult, SAIP quickly became an important agency for the dissemination of guerre révolutionnaire.

The campaign to retain the allegiance of 'friends' was supported by numerous service publications. Bled, a weekly journal, was issued free to soldiers. Printed both in Paris and in Algiers this journal 'addressed itself specifically to the rank and file; at times, it followed a frankly authoritarian line'.[36] Two better quality monthlies, the Revue Militaire d'Information and Revue de Défense Nationale, provided more senior audiences with occasional articles on the conflict. A whole series of corps magazines such as Bellona, Cols-blues, Kepi-blanc, Revue des Forces Terrestres, Revue des Forces Aériennes, Revue Maritime and Soldat d'Outre-mer, provided additional approved reading. Guidance on national and international issues affecting Algeria was contained in Messages d'Action Psychologique published from time to time by the Ministry of National Defence. To Algerian Muslims the army's message was conveyed by loudspeaker, leaflet, films, music and face-to-face persuasion, under the auspices of compagnies de hauts-parleurs et de tracts, CHPT, raised on a scale of one for each of the three corps in Algeria. In his 'General Directive No 1', issued on 19 May 1956 in Guide Practique Pacification, the Resident Minister defined the French

35. O'Ballance, p 96.

36. Paret, p 61.

army's goal as 'bringing together the two local communities and restoring their confidence in each other and in the mother country'.[37] The troops were told:

> Bringing back peace and calm to this portion of French soil cannot be the result of power alone ... without psychological action your effort and sacrifices will be doomed to barrenness and the rebellion will flare up from its ashes. A handful of ambitious agitators, full of hate and without scruples, will then succeed in separating you from the unknowing population and throw them into misery and anarchy.[38]

Although often effective in the short term, French efforts to win Muslim loyalty were undermined in the long term by the absence of any convincing ideological argument to counter the FLN's Algerian nationalism. For colons and for committed army officers, particularly the gurus of guerre révolutionnaire, Algérie française was a concept so complete and so satisfying that it blinded them to reality. The reality was that, after failing for 100 years even to try to sell integration to the Algerian masses, it was now far too late for France to hope to succeed. In any case the contradictions inherent in the concept deprived it of intellectual force. One may ask, how could there be a 'mother country', if Algeria and France were equally 'French soil'? Algérie française was a gut belief, something to be accepted blindly out of patriotism and therefore never to be questioned. By its very nature it was bound, in the long run, to strengthen rather than weaken the FLN's cause. The theorists of guerre révolutionnaire insisted that all internal dissent in western countries flowed from communist subversion. 'The war in Algeria', wrote Colonel Argoud, 'forms an episode in the struggle between the Communist and Western worlds.'[39] Other Frenchmen had argued that Cairo-based pan-Arab nationalism was the sole cause of the revolt.

The dominating influence of politics upon the military struggle, both in Algeria and internationally, posed difficulties enough for the French army, as seen by M. Maurice Mégret:

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37. Quoted Slavko N Bjelajac 'Psywar: The Lessons from Algeria' in Military Review Vol XLII, No 12 (Kansas, December 1962), p 2.

38. Bjelajac, op cit.

39. A Argoud 'Le Problème algérien - Solution française' in L'Express (Paris, 10 May 1962).

> Le problème politique, par une singulière inversion, s'est donc imposé à la pensée militaire, bien avant d'émouvoir les sphères compétentes; mais précisément parce qu'il s'agissait d'une terra incognita, interdict de surcroît, non pas seulement par la tradition républicaine la mieux observée, mais par des tabous corporatifs, la réaction de l'Armée à ce problème n'a été ni univoque ni contrôlée; à plus forte raison a-t-elle été difficile à suivre et à interpréter. 40

Officers who deceived themselves by the belief that the root cause of the rebellion lay in Moscow or Peking or Cairo were vulnerable to that part of the guerre révolutionnaire philosophy that stresses the need for total national commitment to the struggle. The army's job, it could be argued, was to win the war. Without a correct policy firmly applied and wholeheartedly supported by the entire nation the war could not be brought to a successful conclusion. Therefore, might not the army's duty lead it in the direction of changing French society? In November 1957 the improvised Bureaux Psychologique were given formal status as 5es Bureaux in the staff organisation of all French army formations and territorial commands, responsible for press relations, psychological action and warfare, and 'national affairs'. In July 1958 this staff echelon came into existence at the top level of national command, when the General Staff of National Defence formed its 5e Section. 'With little or no exception, key positions (in the 5es Bureaux) were occupied by proponents of the doctrine of guerre révolutionnaire'.[41]

The French campaign of guerre psychologique against the FLN-ALN was imaginative, aggressive and, in the tactical sense, highly effective. On the broad front the struggle with the 'enemy' overlapped the campaign to retain the support of Muslim 'friends' and was carried out by quadrillage, by SAS teams, and by the CHPTs. In addition special

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40. Maurice Mégret L'Action Psychologique, (Paris, 1959), p 19. The writer's attempt at translation reads: 'Thus by a strange inversion the political problem imposes itself upon the thoughts of the military, well before it interests the appropriate authorities; but precisely because this involved a terra incognita, forbidden to boot not just by the best observed republican traditions, but by the taboos of the military establishment, the Army's reaction to this problem has been neither precise nor easily pinned down; for this powerful reason it has been difficult to follow and to interpret.'

41. Paret, p 56.

operations were mounted by the experts in the 5es Bureaux. These aimed to persuade rebels to defect or to intensify struggles between FLN-ALN and rival nationalist guerrillas, or to exploit divisions within ALN ranks. Si Cherif, a former ALN battalion commander, went over to the French side with 500 of his men in July 1957 and fought well for the security forces in the Medea region. Another success for psychological warfare was the defection of Belhadj Djilal, also a battalion CO, who fought against his erstwhile comrades near Orleansville. Mohammed Bellounis, the senior military commander in the 'National Army of the Algerian People', a rival to ALN, was persuaded to turn the firepower of his 4,500 fighters exclusively against the FLN in the region of Aumale, Bou Saada and Aflou. 'With vicious energy he fought the ALN, and also practised torture and extortion in a big way, terrorising the inhabitants in the region. This was a sharp setback for the ALN in that part of central Algeria.'[42] The 5es Bureaux, in their efforts to exploit and deepen the rift between the FLN's External Delegation and the ALN fighters within Algeria, published numerous tracts exposing the life of ease led by émigré FLN leaders in Cairo and elsewhere, and alleging dishonesty in the handling of cash donated for the cause.[43] Such material may have influenced ALN soldiers to desert, and it is certainly true that many did desert during periods when rebel fortunes were low.

Another special operation eventually controlled by the 5es Bureaux involved the re-education of captured personnel. In July 1955 Jacques Soustelle, the Governor General of Algeria, issued instructions on internment camps for such prisoners. Camps were to be of two types: centres de triage et de transit, collecting points for subjects taken in police raids and military operations, and centres d'hébergement, internment camps. At the first, prisoners were sorted and either sent for trial, or quickly released, or passed on to the internment camps for re-education. This consisted of brainwashing (lavage de crâne) followed by reindoctrination (bourrage de crâne), under largely military supervision. The French were able to claim

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42. O'Ballance, p 97.
See also Horne, pp 221-223.

43. Heggoy, p 166.

useful results, in one example quoted,[44] 50 per cent rallying to the French cause, 40 per cent remaining neutral and only 10 per cent rejoining the ALN. The FLN's concern expressed at the Soumman Conference was proof positive that the re-education was effective at least as a temporary measure. However, the absence of a credible government ideology robbed this scheme, like so much of the French counter-insurgency effort in Algeria, of its desired long-term benefits.

It has been argued that the 5es Bureaux's greatest achievement was the massive demonstration of French-Muslim friendship that took place outside Government House in Algiers on 16 May 1958, during the colon-army conspiracy to displace the Paris Government.[45] Action psychologique suddenly preached complete equality between Europeans and Muslims, political and economic, and successfully engineered what communist propagandists call 'a spontaneous demonstration of joy and affection' to show France that their political demands were multi-racial. The purpose and the short-lived nature of this exhibition were characteristic of the Bureaux's political expediency. General Salan the same day appointed Colonel Godard, a 5es Bureaux officer, Director of Internal Security for Algeria.

France used her embassies abroad, more precisely the Service de Presse et d'Information attached to the diplomatic missions, to disseminate propaganda to 'Neutrals'. She was unsuccessful in stifling Afro-Asian attempts to internationalise the Algerian problem through action in the United Nations. In September 1955 the General Assembly voted to include the 'Question of Algeria' on its agenda in spite of the French argument, which received support from most of her NATO partners, that the question was one of domestic jurisdiction and therefore beyond the General Assembly's competence. The Algerian problem was re-submitted by the Afro-Asian bloc in all succeeding UN sessions until independence. This leverage was mainly propagandist in character as the UN never voted for resolutions on the matter that seriously affected France's political or military situation.

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44. Paret, p 65.

45. Horne, pp 314-315.

The French Government went to great lengths to solicit the continued support of her NATO allies, especially the most influential, the USA, when the prolonged war began to be embarrassing. French propaganda rested on the concept of integration, at the same time stressing, somewhat inconsistently, evidence such as rebel atrocities and disunity that pointed to Algerians being unprepared for independence. Other themes dealt with proposed political, social and economic reforms. Incidents in which servicemen acted without government authority, such as the seizing of four nationalist leaders aboard a Moroccan plane which had made an unscheduled landing in Algiers in October 1956, and the bombing of a Tunisian village in February 1958, threw French propaganda onto the defensive. Soustelle, sent to New York in 1956 to speak for France at the UN, was angered by evidence of early defensive attitudes in the delegation. He had found in the delegation office a cupboard stuffed with unused propaganda material showing FLN atrocities. 'But', he complained, 'these were never used by us, for fear of offending the niceties of diplomacy. So how could you win the diplomatic war when you were fighting with your hands tied like this?'[46] Success has been attributed to a French move that threatened countries allowing the flow of arms to the ALN with exposure, although any reduction in this flow may have been due more to the violent acts of 'Bureau 24' and its paid killers, than to propaganda activities.[47] French appeals against support for the rebels could in any case be effective only so long as Western public opinion, at least, regarded the FLN-ALN as terrorists and their violence as morally insupportable. This essential plank in the Paris platform began to crack when reports of the widespread use of torture by French security forces began to appear in the western news media.

The Side-Effects of Guerre Révolutionnaire

Rumours on the subject of torture and maltreatment of Algerian prisoners multiplied during the latter part of 1956. On 5 April 1957

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46. Quoted Horne, p 246.

47. Horne, p 261.

the French Government announced the formation of the Commission de Sauvegarde des droits et des libertés individuels, more shortly, the Safeguard Commission, to investigate the allegations. The Commission submitted its report in September of the same year. The Government did not publish the report but instead adopted the technique of 'leaking' the Commission's findings. This method combines a subtle form of official censorship with the appearance of total (even embarrassing) disclosure. The report allegedly said that there was no general system or approval of torture by the French Army in Algeria, but there had been many isolated incidents. These had been investigated and disciplinary action against offenders taken. Provocation had been great and decisions had been taken under stress, particularly when lives depended upon information. The Commission had found conditions in the internment camps 'satisfactory'.[48] However, even as the Safeguard Commission went about its work, French paratroops were fighting the Battle of Algiers.

On 7 January 1957, Resident Minister Lacoste issued a decree to General Jacques Massu that conferred upon him and his 10th Parachute Division all police powers and full responsibility for the maintenance of peace in the capital.

> The Battle of Algiers immediately entered its most violent phase. In the next several weeks the two opponents appeared at their worst. The Forces of Order tortured the guilty and the innocent indiscriminately in an attempt to uncover all the nationalist leaders. The rebels reacted to the execution of captured friends and to use of torture by resorting to blind urban terrorism. Massu and Lacoste, of course, tried to excuse the brutality of the Forces of Order on the grounds of expediency. Although a few innocent people suffered, they claimed, the use of torture permitted soldiers to root out the terrorists and thereby to protect many more innocent people. The nationalists, in turn, justified their violence on two grounds - first, they were not strong enough to fight the French in the open. Second, they felt that without some conspicuous successes they would be deprived of their popular following. [49]

When pressed on the matter of torture by newspaper reporters, Lacoste replied sharply: 'Let us do our work. I ask only one thing of you ....

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48. O'Ballance, p 97.

49. Heggoy, pp 233-234.

foreign correspondents: it is to please not come and bother us'.[50] In the Battle of Algiers torture was no longer denied. Instead, the French authorities on the spot rested their case on utility, and on the ALN's greater evil. This change of tactic was reflected within the army. Whereas maltreatment had previously been the work of individuals acting on their own authority, sometimes with passive approval from their superiors, sometimes at risk of courts-martial, now orders had been issued referring to 'close interrogation', which stated that there should be, at each level of the interrogation system, well-trained personnel and 'sharp interrogation teams'.[51] A nod was as good as a wink. No questions were asked provided results were forthcoming. Later, a former captain of the 1st Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment stated:

> I don't know what hell the man went through who gave the order. But I know the rape it was for the young men straight from St Cyr. All myths and illusions crashed together. They were told that the end justifies the means, and that France's victory depended on it. 52

To consolidate the success achieved by the paratroops, Massu set up counter-terror gangs of FLN-ALN turncoats, the 'Blue Caps'. These thugs were given a free hand, always provided results were satisfactory.

France's political and moral justification for governing Algeria rested upon the notion that Algeria and Metropolitan France were one, and that French rule benefited Algerians in the same way as it benefited Frenchmen. By insisting that the struggle in Algeria was an internal, domestic issue, France committed herself to the parallel, and in the circumstances absolutely correct theory that everything that was done by security forces to suppress the FLN-ALN was an act of government administration, answerable in law, and not an act of war as such. The proponents of guerre révolutionnaire, on the other hand, had always denied the limited, essentially political nature of

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50. Quoted Edward Behr Dramatique Algérie (Paris, 1962), pp 112-113.

51. Patrick Kessel and Giovanni Pirelli Le Peuple algerien (Paris, 1962), p 94.

52. Report on trial of OAS terrorists Manchester Guardian (Manchester, 3 August 1962).

revolutionary and counter-revolutionary warfare, demanding 'a total politico-military effort, the rejection of compromise'.[53] They had their way in the Battle of Algiers. They won the struggle to eject the ALN from the city. Arguably, their methods lost France what was left of her 'legitimacy' and hastened the FLN's eventual triumph. 'The question became a political issue that gravely weakened the Fourth Republic in France and definitely divided the Algerian population into two groups.'[54] 'So far as the war itself went, torture and the unavoidable knowledge of it made a farce of pacification. In the end, the recourse to such methods was an admission of defeat: atrocities made re-education in a non-totalitarian sense impossible.'[55]

French recourse to torture also provided opponents of the war in France with precisely the weapon they needed in their expanding struggle to turn mainstream French opinion against supporting the war. Amongst the prisoners tortured by Massu's men were two European communists, Maurice Audin and Henri Alleg. The first perished under interrogation but Alleg survived to write a powerful propaganda document, La Question, in which he described in vivid detail his experiences.[56] How much is true and how much 'documentary fiction' it is impossible to say; however its convincing style and 'more in sorrow than anger' manner disturbed French consciences. The final lines read: 'All this, I have to say for those Frenchmen who will read me. I want them to know that the Algerians do not confuse their torturers with the great people of France, from whom they have learnt so much and whose friendship is so dear to them. But they must know what is done IN THEIR NAME.'[57] Conventional morality does not as a rule govern a communist's behaviour and it is reasonable to assume that Alleg's book was for him just another blow for a revolutionary cause. Certainly Jean-Paul Sartre's preface,[58] which advances from a

53. Paret, p 30.

54. Heggoy, p 244.

55. Paret, p 76.

56. Henri Alleg La Question (Paris, 1958).

57. Alleg (in English) The Question (London, 1958), p 96.

58. Alleg, op cit pp 11-31. Sartre's preface to the English language edition had originally appeared as an article in L'Express.

condemnation of French torture to the defence of FLN terrorism, exposes that author's sympathies. These fine points of motivation did not, however, deprive the torture propaganda of its force. Recognising this, the French authorities did their best to prevent the book and newspaper articles discussing it from reaching Algeria and, after several months during which La Question enjoyed massive sales in France, the police seized further copies. This was apparently the first time since the eighteenth century that a book had been confiscated in France for political reasons.[59] A motive in publishing the book secondary to embarrassing France's whole Algerian policy may have been a more tactical one. Heggoy tells us that French paratroopers were the troops most feared by the ALN, 'which went to great lengths to avoid combat with them'.[60] Propaganda discrediting these excellent soldiers, and the methods that had caused the FLN-ALN to be driven out of Algiers, was absolutely essential if the rebel organisation was to escape total destruction. A cynic might argue that, having suffered the political and propaganda disadvantages of unconventional methods, the French might just as well have persevered and at least benefited from the military advantages on a countrywide scale. Such a cynic would, however, be half-way towards accepting the cult of guerre révolutionnaire together with its totalitarian overtones.

Guerre révolutionnaire did not specify torture, it merely pointed its soldier-adherents in a direction that could easily lead to that destination. Nor did it advocate political coups. Yet the dynamics of Algerian politics, particularly the colons' insistence upon an Algérie française in which their privileged position vis-a-vis the Muslims would be forever enshrined, created links between reactionary politicians and certain military leaders. Through the 5es Bureaux, reactionary views found expression in military psychological policy, which as we have seen dominated a hugh audience. 'Between 1957 and ... January 1960, the 5es Bureaux were almost entirely free of control from Paris ... From a subordinate agency of the government and the armed forces, action psychologique changed into a policy-making body whose members showed increasing readiness to interpret and even adapt

59. Alleg, Footnote to the forword, p 9.

60. Heggoy, p 113.

policy to suit their view of the operational requirements in Algeria'.[61] Senior military officers were prominent in the crisis that toppled the Fourth Republic and brought Charles de Gaulle to power in 1958. When the new national leader, appreciating the cost and futility of an extended Algerian war, promised that the Algerian people would be free to decide their own future once the process of pacification was complete, and when militant colons took to the barricades in Algiers in protest, the army's loyalty faltered. Finally in 1961 four retired generals, Salan, Challe, Jouhand and Zeller tried unsuccessfully to harness the army in Algeria for their revolutionary purposes and ride upon it to seize power in Paris. Amongst the officers condemned for their parts in this attempted coup were Colonels Lacheroy, Argoud, Broizat, Gardes and Godard, all devotees of the cult.[62]

Discussion

The FLN-ALN set out to destroy French rule in Algeria by military means. They failed, but in the attempt they forced France to adopt methods that destroyed the notion of integration. Because France's military successes fell short of absolute victory, they left insoluble political problems. Heggoy has concluded:

> In spite of obvious difficulties, the French counter-revolutionary effort was remarkably effective on the whole. On an international scale, however, and in France itself, pressures mounted that could no long be ignored or resisted. Public opinion in the mother country showed a steady decline in support for the Algerian war. In Morocco and Tunisia the ALN continued to maintain strong forces that could not be destroyed without a drastic widening of the Algerian conflict. To win militarily, the government would have had to convince a large majority of Frenchmen that Algeria was worth the tremendous sacrifices that would be required to defeat the FLN. To assure a political victory, France would have had to defeat the Free Algerian Government-in-Exile by propaganda and diplomacy; this she could not or would not do. After the demise of the Fourth Republic the government was no longer willing to continue the conflict at any cost. Frantz Fanon was essentially correct when he wrote, in 1959, that the revolutionaries had already won. 63

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61. Paret, pp 76-77.

62. Paret, p 113.

63. Heggoy, pp 264-265. (Quote is Frantz Fanon A Dying Colonialism (New York, 1967) pp 29, 31)

We may judge this a victory in which propaganda played an important role.

FLN-ALN propaganda was effective because it won the support of the Muslim population, the sympathy of many influential nations, and the grudging respect of France. Governments of the Fourth Republic lacked the strength and unity necessary either to implement their assurances to the colons that Algeria, as a part of France, would never be surrendered, or to face up to unpalatable but realistic alternatives. By the time de Gaulle came to power in June 1958 it was too late to restore the status quo ante. Instead he took what advantage he could from the army's successes against the ALN to find new solutions. These were costly for the colons and humiliating to those army officers wedded to 'the deep conviction that wars undertaken to preserve the integrity of the Union française are truly national wars'.[64] The OAS and the generals' revolt arose out of these frustrated interests. De Gaulle succeeded in saving France and her army from the worst consequences of both.

The Fourth Republic governments of Messrs Mendès-France, Faure, Mollet, Gaillard and Pflimlin may be blamed for allowing certain army officers in Algeria to develop their own political philosophy and disseminate this creed through the 5es Bureaux. Paret has conceded that, 'if some years of peace had followed Dien Bien Phu, military and civilian experiences might have become synthesized into a doctrine of psychological warfare not inimical to a parliamentary democracy and applied by an agency under firm governmental control. The outbreak of the Algerian rebellion with its sophisticated exploitation of propaganda, both added new pressures and enabled the Army to dominate the field'.[65] A parent who hands the keys of a sports car to a child cannot easily escape blame for a subsequent accident, however badly the child behaves. This writer rejects the implication that somehow the pace of events exonerated French governments from responsibility for what happened in Algeria. The government handed to the army powers that should properly have been exercised by politicians, closed its eyes to the consequences and failed to exercise

64. Paret, p 28 (Quote by anonymous senior army officer, 1956).
65. Paret, p 55.

the tight control of policy that is essential in all forms of conflict and doubly so in internal war. The army, partly under the influence of guerre révolutionnaire, filled a political vacuum.

The doctrine of guerre révolutionnaire came so close to beating the FLN-ALN that its disciples can still proclaim its merit. This is not an empty claim; subject to certain qualifications the theory has many strong points. The chief flaws in the doctrine as preached and applied by its originators may be seen as follows. It tended to disregard the Clausewitzian dictum that all wars must be regarded as political acts, and it overlooked completely his advice: 'Now the first, the greatest and the most decisive act of the judgement which a statesman and commander performs is that of correctly recognising in this respect the kind of war he is undertaking, of not taking it for, or wishing to make it, something which by the nature of the circumstances it cannot be.'[66] These omissions, linked with the belief that every colonial insurrection was Moscow-inspired and Cairo-led, led to the hopelessly mistaken 'total war' philosophy. This in turn started the French army on a race to extremes which ended with well over a million Muslims in regroupement centres, half a million French conscripts in Algeria, and world public opinion sympathetic to the rebels. For all guerre révolutionnaire's emphasis on psychological action, its adherents seemed incapable of asking themselves one question before embarking on some new policy - 'Where will it end?' Arguably, the race to extremes is undesirable in any conflict. In the Algerian war, guerre révolutionnaire's totalism could only have succeeded, in Paret's judgement, had France been a 'totalitarian nation within the framework of an aggressively anti-Russian and anti-Chinese alliance'.[67]

The doctrine as applied in Algeria neglected the limitations imposed by domestic public opinion upon military commitments that are seen as less than vital to national survival. Few democracies will tolerate high casualties, huge expense and severe criticism for more than a few years. Thus, against an opponent willing to wage a long war, government forces do well if they strive to limit the scale

66. Karl von Clausewitz On War (New York, 1943), p 18.

67. Paret, p 123.

of the conflict and thus reduce to a minimum its effects on national manpower, economy and self-respect. The relevance of torture allegations to this equation is obvious. The purveyors of guerre révolutionnaire might reply by insisting that, had their doctrine been applied at the outset of the Algerian revolution, rather than after 18 months or two years, and had the security force response been total, the insurrection would have been crushed so quickly that neither international nor domestic public opinion need have been ruffled. Such a defence merits careful consideration, since it is certainly true that the most vulnerable phase for the FLN-ALN was the initial period of 'survival' and that the French authorities' inadequate response enabled the rebels to consolidate.

In answer we might agree that lack of 'contact' by the resident security forces deprived the administration of vital intelligence, and a failure to react even when the full extent of the threat should have been evident threw away a unique opportunity. However, the security force reaction that ought to have occurred needed neither political, totalist, nor brutal overtones. If, in spite of rapid military intervention, the rebellion had nevertheless prospered, soldiers ought not to have wished to make the war something which by the nature of the circumstances it could not be.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of guerre révolutionnaire is its prescription of politico-military-psychological counter-revolution as the only effective remedy for rebellion, as opposed to plain military counter-insurgency. Events elsewhere than in Algeria have demonstrated the effectiveness of the triad. Why then did the political component of guerre révolutionnaire fail in Algeria? We may find the answer in the contrast between the theory of integration, implying equal rights for Algerians of all races and religions, and the practice, which allowed a privileged colon class. The French army, particularly the Foreign Legion, forged strong links with the colons and was committed to perpetuating their superior status. The propaganda of guerre révolutionnaire relied upon 'integration' as its political centrepiece to undercut the appeal of Algerian nationalism. This could not work effectively in opposition to facts that disproved its claims. Counter-revolution should in any case be controlled by politicians not soldiers. The apparent willingness of certain French army officers to

use the 5es Bureaux to formulate as well as to disseminate political policy plunged the armed forces deep into French domestic politics.

Algerian nationalist propaganda, like the rebellion itself, began without the support of an existing organisation. It had to struggle onto its feet as the revolution slowly got under way, and it had to make do without the benefit of pre-propaganda. The absence of pre-propaganda meant that the mass of Algerian Muslims had never been made to live in a psychological climate that prepared them for disciplined, violent action. They had no myths of nationalism, no visions of desirable political or social objectives. The FLN-ALN were terribly exposed during the early 'survival' period, not just on account of military weaknesses but because they were only now beginning to organise and mobilise the mass behind the movement. They achieved this aim under the difficult conditions facing them by the ruthless use of terror. At the same time, by a remarkable understanding of their 'friendly' target audience, and through the efficient organisation of the OPA, they succeeded in sowing the seeds of real allegiance, without which the rebels could never have survived the seven and a half years of conflict or won the undisputed leadership of the Algerian nation. For the battle itself the themes of mobilisation, listed on page 183, were followed by the themes of survival, conflict and victory.

Survival themes included demands for 'special status' for rebel prisoners, terror against informers and pro-French Algerians, the transfer of guilt and the assertion that various security measures were 'counter-productive'. For conflict, the dominating theme was national independence, in other words the 'righteousness' theme carried over from mobilisation, backed up by the assumed benefits of 'long war', linked to the 'inevitability of rebel victory' and 'security force incompetence'. The 'bad faith' theme often adopted by revolutionaries to discredit government attempts to build bridges between authority and the supporters of the revolt, was used by the FLN to destroy the 'middle ground' of Europeans and Muslims who sincerely wished for peace and sought a compromise solution. The message style was the terror which struck Philippeville and the counter-terror that this act set in motion. Ethically, both acts may be seen as indefensible, the FLN's horrors being the worse because of

their premeditated and cold-bloodied nature, in contrast to the unscheduled and hot-bloodied French reaction. However, viewed as an act of rebellion, the FLN's cool-headed trigger action, however horrible, achieved its propaganda purpose, which was to detonate the uncontrolled and, for the authorities, disastrous response.

It is sometimes said, usually with indignation, that when government forces and revolutionaries are in conflict the former are expected by the media and public opinion to behave like angels while the latter may do as they please. There is an element of truth in this complaint and a far greater element of misunderstanding. Ordinary people in liberal societies who are not committed to the rebels do expect an altogether different standard of behaviour from the forces of law and order than they expect from insurgents: it would be hardly flattering to the security forces were this not the case. Instead of inspiring anger and indignation, this attitude could more profitably be turned to advantage as the rallying-point around which the lawabiding could be mobilised against the revolt. However the price to be paid for such a policy is a sincere determination on the part of the security forces not to act unlawfully and to make amends when individuals overstep the mark. Every man has his breaking-point, and this writer, for example, cannot say how he might have behaved had he been one of the French paras on that hot August day in 1955. This, however, is aside from the point, which is that by meeting terror with terror, the French not only turned the slaughter into a major victory for FLN propaganda, but destroyed the moral foundation necessary for a convincing counter-propaganda campaign to discredit a movement so deeply committed to barbarity. Thus the FLN-ALN were able to employ terror as a key weapon throughout the war, undeterred by effective world censure.

The final conflict themes of revolutionary propaganda involved the accumulation of 'credibility', based initially on ALN prowess in the field and, when this faded, on the potential of their armies in Tunisia and Morocco, and of 'legitimacy', gained by the FLN's hold over the Muslim masses and success in winning international support. Equipped with these two advantages, the FLN-ALN were able to project the themes of victory. These were, for metropolitan France, 'the cost

and futility of resistance' and, for the colons and administration in Algeria, 'the climate of collapse'. Just as the over-reactions of police and military assisted early themes by providing facts, the excesses of the OAS contributed, however dangerously, to the final themes.

CHAPTER VI

'THE HORRORS OF ORGANISED MURDER' [1]

PROPAGANDA OF THE PROVISIONAL IRA

> When a war breaks out people say, "It's too stupid; it can't last long". But though a war may well be "too stupid", that doesn't prevent its lasting. Stupidity has a knack of getting its way; as we should see if we were not always so much wrapped up in ourselves. 2

Introduction

On 15 August 1971 the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland, Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Tuzo, wrote to military units under his command to warn them that the bullets and bombs aimed by the Irish Republican Army were not that organisation's only form of attack. Revolutionary violence, he advised, was backed up by hostile propaganda, and every soldier should be conscious of this threat. This warning, coming as it did six days after the start of the Security Forces' internment operation, was timely. With hindsight we may say that the IRA's propaganda attack began more than 12 months earlier, and was a key factor in their strategy. One interpretation would see their campaign as one of leverage, as defined on p 28 , in which case the violent acts can be demoted to a supporting role, as illustrations in a book support the text, and propaganda hoisted to pride of place.
A study of the 1919-1921 war in Ireland, written by the C-in-C's staff immediately after the event, had this to say on the subject:

> In one department, namely publicity, it (Sinn Féin) was unrivalled. This department was energetic, subtle and exceptionally skilful in mixing truth, falsehood and exaggeration and was perhaps the most powerful and the least fought arm of the Sinn Féin forces. 3

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1. **Sheehy-Skeffingham,** from the quotation on p 113.
2. Albert Camus The Plague translated Stuart Gilbert (London, 1948), p 37.
3. War Office Record of the Rebellion in Ireland (London, 1922) Vol II, p 46.

Certainly it was leverage that beat the British then, and the same method was used successfully by the Zionists after World War II.[4] Very little seemed to have been learnt from these setbacks, however, and in 1971 Britain endeavoured to resist insurrection in Northern Ireland with neither the knowledge necessary to analyse the propaganda threat nor the capability to react. During the course of the struggle this deficiency was appreciated and efforts were made to redress the situation.

This chapter examines aspects of Provisional IRA propaganda in the Northern Ireland insurgency and reaction to it by security forces. The words and deeds of other organisations, though important, are touched upon only in passing. At the time of writing violence continues. This chapter inevitably suffers from the defects inseparable from 'instant history', being based on incomplete evidence and written sources some of which are partisan. To minimise these difficulties the study concentrates on the period beginning in the summer of 1971 and ending nine months later, in March 1972. Of the sources quoted there is probably none that would be regarded as unbiased by all parties to the dispute. Mr Callaghan might be criticised by extreme Republicans and die-hard Protestants, Dr Cruise O'Brien is accused by both wings of the IRA of supporting British interests and has been assaulted by Protestants for the opposite reason, but both are seen by the writer as authors whose work is fair and impartial. The same may be said of Dr Hull, Dr Clutterbuck, Messrs Mawhinney and Wells, Mr Charters, Mr Limpkin, Miss Tracy and Mr Geraghty, and of Lords Gardiner, Widgery et al who presided over various enquiries and tribunals. Mr Utley writes from High Tory convictions and the army officers quoted speak from a military viewpoint. Messrs Kennally and Preston, Dr Uris, the National Broadcasting Corporation and most if not all of the Irish newspapers quoted probably tried to be impartial, but seem to have accepted Republican assumptions that may have coloured their accounts an emerald green. In contrast, the Belfast Newsletter is bright orange, as are the words quoted from the Rev Ian Paisley. The Guardian's Mr Winchester and the Sunday Times 'Insight' team write

4. See Chapter IV.

with what may be seen as a Catholic or Republican bias. So does Miss McGuire, whose defection from the Provisionals was due to disagreement over means, not ends. Mr McCann speaks for the Republican Left while the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau represents the extreme views of the Provisional IRA. This account is written by one whose personal involvement over the period discussed threatens the detachment which he has nevertheless striven to achieve.

Background to the Conflict 1: Provisional IRA Strategy and Tactics

The civil rights movement that brought Ulster Catholics into conflict both with Protestant mobs and with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in 1968 and 1969 was at heart reformist and, at least by intention, non-sectarian. The violence that ensued did, however, create an ideal situation for the overthrow of the Northern Ireland Government, and this opportunity was seized by militant Republicans.

The situation contained four main elements important to this study. First, the one million Protestants of Northern Ireland felt more than ever threatened by the three and a half million Catholic majority population of Ireland as a whole. Second, the half million Northern Catholics felt more than ever threatened by the Protestants who dominated the North politically and economically. Allegedly partial behaviour by the RUC had aroused fears of armed Protestant attack which in turn seemed to justify arming Catholics for defence. Third, opinion in the Irish Republic swung hard behind 'our people', that is to say the Catholics in the North.[5] Northern Protestants and the British were seen in an unfriendly light. Influenced by the dominant myths of 1916 and 1920 relating to blood sacrifice and violence, extreme Republicans in the South sponsored revolution in the North aimed at achieving the re-unification of Ireland by force. The Irish Republican Army, which had veered towards the Marxist left, split. The Marxists

5. For a discussion of Irish perceptions of the conflict see Conor Cruise O'Brien States of Ireland, (London, 1972). Following Cruise O'Brien's lead the terms 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' are here used more in their tribal or political sense than in their strict religious meanings.

claimed official status, and took that name: the Nationalists called themselves Provisionals. The Provisional IRA was to pose initially as a Catholic defence force in the North and, when the time was ripe, launch into insurgency.[6] Fourth, liberal opinion in Great Britain had been offended by reports of heavy-handed Protestant reaction to the civil rights movement, particularly by television coverage of RUC riot control, and the Westminster Government intervened.[7] The RUC was disarmed and its part-time back-up force, the 'B Specials', disbanded.[8] The Northern Ireland Government at Stormont was encouraged to speed up reforms demanded by the civil rights demonstrators. Coming at a time when the Protestant population felt under threat, these measures further polarised opinion and had a devastating effect on police morale and effectiveness. Already in August 1969 troops had been turned out 'in aid of the civil power', and the GOC Northern Ireland had assumed overall responsibility for security. Humiliated, angry and convinced in their own minds that they had been unfairly judged, the Ulster Protestants henceforth relied for their security upon policies and actions approved at Westminster.[9] The corollary was that such policies and actions would be restrained by mainland public opinion which was still unaffected by the Provisional violence and which had been part-way persuaded by the media to see Northern Ireland Protestants as the villains of the piece.

The Provisionals' strategy exploited the situation brought about by civil rights confrontation. By posing as a Catholic defence force they gained acceptance by the anxious Northern minority, which had thus

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6. Cruise O'Brien, Chapter 11.

7. See James Callaghan A House Divided, (London, 1973) and Sunday Times Insight Team Ulster (London, 1972).

8. For an extreme Ulster Protestant view of this action, see footnote 84 to Roger H Hull The Irish Triangle (Princeton, 1976), p 76, which quotes the Rev Ian Paisley: 'The bulwarks of Northern Ireland were the RUC and USC ('B' Specials). In order for the IRA to succeed, both had to be destroyed, since the IRA could never achieve its objective and never bring this country into a state of anarchy unless it first overthrew these two forces.'

9. After March 1972 Protestants expanded their own para-military 'Ulster Defence Association' and resurrected the more violent 'Ulster Volunteer Force'.

far relied upon the army for its protection.[10] All through 1970 and the first half of 1971 the Provisionals (and, less obviously, the Officials) laid the infrastructure for revolt: recruiting and training; building an intelligence network; fund raising; the purchase and importation of arms and explosives; domination of Catholic areas by a mixture of ideological indoctrination and intimidation; and the psychological preparation of Catholic opinion for insurrection. This last prerequisite involved bringing Catholics into confrontation with the army, the murders of soldiers, and other sub-revolutionary acts designed to bring about military counter-measures which could be interpreted as oppression.[11] By mid-1971 these objectives had been achieved and the insurrection began.

It was Provisional policy that their violence should seem to be aimed at targets that, within their revolutionary philosophy, could be termed 'legitimate'. In a 1973 propaganda document Freedom Struggle[12] their bombing campaign was said to have had two aims:

> (1) to stretch the British Army to the limits of its resources and to keep pressure off the nationalist areas;
>
> (2) to weaken the economy by sabotage operations against government and commercial property with the British taxpayer picking up the bill for damage done.[13]

In practice it gradually became an all-out attack against Protestants and Protestant property, with police, military and government targets included only when tempting opportunities presented themselves. The true aims of the violence were possibly to make Northern Ireland appear to be 'ungovernable' thus undermining the authority and confidence of Westminster and Stormont, to kill as many British

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10. Brian Mawhinney and Ronald Wells Conflict and Christianity in Northern Ireland (Berkhamsted, 1975), p 87. See also Note 11.

11. Reviewing a book (Times, London, 20 November 1975) Cruise O'Brien wrote on this period: 'The Provisionals set themselves to break up that fraternization (between Catholics and Army) and events like the curfew and search, which their armed activities provoked, were exploited to that end.' See also Cruise O'Brien, op cit, pp 244-245 and Insight Team, Chapter 12.

12. Irish Republican Publicity Bureau Freedom Struggle (Dublin, 1973).

13. Publicity Bureau, p 34.

servicemen as possible, to impress upon Britain the cost in lives as well as the futility of the Ulster commitment, and to terrorise Ulster Protestants so that in the event of a British withdrawal they would acquiesce to unification. All the violence was in a broad sense 'propaganda of the deed' since no Provisional seriously imagined that the attack could inflict military defeat on the army or physically drive one million Protestants into the sea.

After her defection from the Provisionals Miss Maria McGuire wrote:

> The main examples followed by the Provisionals in deciding to hit British soldiers were the guerrilla campaigns against the British in Cyprus in the 1950s and Aden in the 1960s ... The Army Council's[14] first target was to kill thirtysix British soldiers - the same number who died in Aden. Their target was reached in early November 1971. But this, the Army Council felt, was not enough. I remember Dave[15], amongst others, saying: "We've got to get eighty". Once eighty had been killed, Dave felt, the pressure on the British to negotiate would be immense. 16

This quotation provides a valuable insight into Provisional strategy and tends to confirm the proposition that theirs was a campaign of leverage.

Background to the Conflict 2: The Security Force Response

The peculiar circumstances of Ulster in 1971 posed novel problems for security forces and particularly for the army. British counter-insurgency doctrine, developed and well tried over 25 years, insisted on political primacy in the direction and control of all forms of operation - political, military and psychological - and encouraged close co-operation at all levels of command between administrator, policeman and soldier. The British Army had fared best against insurgents seeking a military victory in rural areas. The Radfan hills, the Malay and Borneo jungles, and the Troodos Mountains in Cyprus had seen revolutionary gangs harried and smashed

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14. The 'Army Council' is the Provisional IRA's governing body.
15. David O'Connell, a council member.
16. Maria McGuire To Take Arms (London, 1973), pp 69-70.

by confident and efficient military units. When rebellion broke out in towns and villages, as in Jerusalem, Aden, Nicosia and Ismailia, some of the confidence and efficiency faded. Highly exposed to the news media, usually facing a foe in plain clothes, against whom all action must be of a police nature, such operations imposed unfamiliar and unwelcome strains. Where the insurgent campaign relied on leverage, with the necessary obligation on the insurgents to make propaganda capital out of every action, the strains increased. Nevertheless the army's role in such conditions was usually to support the police, upon whose shoulders rested the difficult task of keeping the operation legally sound. Provided the soldiers fulfilled their allotted role sensitively and without error, all was well.

British Army understanding of the psychological element in countering insurgency had been stimulated during the long campaign in Malaya. In 1951 the High Commissioner had written: 'The answer (to the rebellion) lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people.'[17] Concern for the opinions and motivation of 'friends' and 'neutrals' in such situations became an accepted military duty, taught at staff colleges and practised in the field by the provision of medical help, the digging of wells and other useful deeds. In Malaya and other theatres of insurgency small psychological operations teams were assembled on an ad hoc basis to address messages to the 'enemy'. Surrender leaflets, offers of amnesty, and themes to demoralise or mislead were their stock in trade, and much effective work was done. However neither 'hearts and minds' activities nor psyops aimed at jungle encampments touched upon the topic of modern propaganda, of the sort that had been used by Sinn Féin after the first Great War and by the Zionists after the second, and which by 1971 was in the process of demolishing what was left of the United States' military credibility in Vietnam.

After the IRA had called off their cross-border campaign of 1956-62 the Northern Ireland Government had cut back the RUC's Special Branch. This had led to weaknesses in the 'intelligence cycle'[18]

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17. Attributed by popular belief to Sir Henry Gurney, High Commissioner for Malaya, 1951, but no written source uncovered.

18. See Frank Kitson Low Intensity Operations (London, 1971), Chapter 6.

and partial loss of contact between police intelligence and revolutionary sources. Nor was there much real contact between constables and ordinary Catholics in the hard Republican areas. Foot patrolling was too dangerous, and perfunctory vehicle sorties were no good substitute. In the Bogside area of Londonderry the RUC station had been closed down. After 1969, disarmed and somewhat disorganised, the RUC's ability to enforce law and order in the Provisional IRA's chosen 'base areas' was virtually nil. The willingness of the RUC to co-operate with the military was never in question, but this did not alter the fact that, apart from the work of brave Special Branch officers, the army was on its own in Republican areas. Nothing in its experience since World War II had prepared the British Army to act simultaneously in a police and a military capacity. Nor were soldiers equipped by training to gather intelligence from an urban civilian population, beginning almost from scratch, in conditions that newsmen call 'high visibility'.[19] Although the British Army was perhaps sharper than most, any army is a blunt instrument in a police role. The very least that was needed was firm and consistent political control.

This, too, was absent. Political control was divided between Westminster and Stormont, and in Westminster responsibility was split between the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence.[20] Political understanding of how to conduct a counter-insurgency campaign seemed confused. Instead of seeing military, political and psychological activity as weapons to be used in close and continuous harmony, politicians tended to regard the military and political options as alternatives. As for the psychological weapon, no one initially seemed aware that it might exist. Certainly the British Government in 1971 had difficulties. The divided political responsibility for security in Ulster was not of their making, and any attempt to remedy it would have created grave political dangers. Sensibly determined not

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19. See David Charters (iii) 'Intelligence and Psychological Warfare Operations in Northern Ireland' in Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies Journal September 1977, pp 22-27.

20. See Callaghan, op cit.

to allow divided domestic opinion to deprive the army of moral support, in the manner that broke the Americans in Vietnam, the Government established a bi-partisan Northern Ireland policy with the Opposition.

Originally deployed in a peace-keeping role between the warring communities, the army had slowly to adapt its posture and tactics to meet the growing insurgency threat. To defeat the Provisionals the army tried to keep violence as low as possible while taking the bombers, gunmen and violent activists out of circulation as quickly as circumstances allowed. This involved the slow process of gathering intelligence, arresting suspects for questioning, imprisoning convicted terrorists, and exacting as high a price as possible for IRA offensive action. Throughout this process they felt themselves to be in danger of suffering defeat by the insurgent's indirect attack, his use of leverage to force political surrender, a fear that events in Vietnam tended to encourage.

In the summer of 1971 the Provisional IRA held the initiative. Bold raids occurred daily, with very few losses of Provisional manpower, and intimidation of witnesses made a mockery of the courts. The security force response appeared inadequate and ineffective. Indignation and anger were rising in the Protestant population, whose spokesmen demanded stronger security force action. The dangers loomed of a 'Protestant Backlash' or of the Provisionals securing so strong a military position that no action of troops short of full-scale warfare could dislodge them. Either outcome, it seemed, might topple Ulster into a truly ungovernable state.

Background to the Conflict 3: The Eternal Triangle

This chapter is concerned with Provisional IRA propaganda and the utterances of other violent groups receive only passing mention. Nevertheless the triangular nature of the Northern Ireland problem affected the security force response to Provisional violence and cramped authority's style in countering hostile propaganda. In the textbook setting one's 'loyal' population supports government policy and identifies completely with security forces. They are the 'good guys' and the rebels are the 'bad guys'. This simple, black and white scenario is usually blurred to a greater or lesser extent in real

situations, but often it can still provide the basic ingredient of the psychological campaign. In Northern Ireland, as one observer has seen it, 'the Army, which was supposed to be neutral in the conflict between Catholic and Protestant, found itself fighting terrorism from both sides. So it was difficult for the security forces to put out a single, direct message drawing a clear distinction between "good" and "bad" '.[21] This handicap and the need for the security forces to be alert to threats from two directions, complicated both military operations and presentational matters. So far as threats by one community against the other were concerned, the army's neutral stance was clear. However, insofar as the Provisional IRA mounted the only full-scale rebellion, the army saw itself as protecting the entire population, Protestant and Catholic, against this attack. The Provisionals sought to persuade Catholics that by resisting their insurgency the army was siding with the Protestants in the inter-communal struggle, and the army had to try to retain Protestant loyalty in the fight against the IRA without encouraging the belief that this equated to taking their side in civil strife.

The Media Battleground

In any campaign of leverage the principal objectives of revolutionary operations are people's minds. The lines of approach to those objectives are through the news media. Thus in a sense the battlefield of the Ulster struggle was made up of televisions, newspapers, radios, films, journals, pamphlets, posters and the voice of the man in the street. This interpretation brings journalists, news editors, television reporters and feature writers, as well as public relations staffs and propagandists, onto a central and dominating feature of the battle landscape.

The role of the media is to present news, usually in competition with rivals both as to speed and quality of content. The quality tends to be measured in terms of public interest, which weighs heavily towards the sensational, outrageous and debunking. Events are treated as 'stories', without too much regard for wider context or hidden

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21. Charters (iii), p 25.

implications. Television inevitably elevates the visually dramatic above news items that lack such quality, a tendency repeated by newspapers relying heavily upon picture coverage. Thus the blowing up of an hotel, recorded on film and tape, is likely to overshadow the arrest of the culprits, accomplished out of sight of news reporters, and announced in a sober press release.[22] Even when news editors do their best, as they usually do, to provide a balanced coverage of events, the lasting impressions on the public consciousness are likely to be formed by the most striking images. Events that do not happen cannot, by definition, make news. Thus security policy may succeed in preventing some disaster such as civil war without earning favourable publicity. The public will nonetheless be made aware of any deaths that do occur, and they will watch from their armchairs as a public house burns, anxiously wondering why it is that nothing is done to put an end to these tragedies.

Investigative reporting attempts to uncover news items hidden by the wicked, corrupt, bumbling or authoritarian, and expose to the wrath of public indignation scandals that might otherwise remain unknown. Sunday newspapers pioneered this form of journalism and television has not been slow to adapt it for small-screen presentation. Features, printed or in the form of radio or TV documentaries, are concerned to expand public understanding of the issues underlying the news. More often than not these are used as vehicles for the writer's own views and opinions. Depth of understanding and interpretation is often lacking, particularly under the pressure that news media seem to generate, that requires the writer or commentator to contribute his share of sensation, usually in the form of a doom-laden summing-up. There would be hardly any point in doing a half-hour piece on, say, motorway accidents, if in conclusion the narrator conceded that statistical trends were comforting. In all kinds of reporting, bad news is news, good news is nothing. It is safe for an investigative journalist to probe behind police or army actions; if he tries this behind terrorists he may get a bullet in the head.

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22. See Maurice Tugwell 'Revolutionary Propaganda and the Role of Information Services in counter-insurgency operations' in Canadian Defence Journal 3, Autumn 1973, pp 28-33.

This factor of personal security was always present in the media battleground of Ulster. TV teams and newspaper correspondents could not adequately cover events without some measure of goodwill and co-operation from the local population. Reporters' sympathetic handling of the civil rights disturbances had earned them confidence and friendship in Catholic areas and hostility in Protestant. So far as reporting Provisional IRA activity was concerned, this situation generally helped, since it was in Catholic areas that they would otherwise be most at risk. As Provisional violence erupted and casualities mounted the great majority of UK newsmen reacted in the same way as any other person might - with revulsion. Nevertheless, discretion often remained the better part of valour, and in 'balancing'[23] their reports, some journalists exhibited a measure of ambivalence that many soldiers felt was less than fair to security forces. A much smaller number evidently decided to report the struggle 'from the other side'.

Newspaper and television reporters from the Irish Republic included some in their ranks who glorified Provisional violence, at least until March 1972. One Irish reporter, a personable and able youth, seemed to devote much of his boundless energy to sponsoring news conferences and generally making himself useful to the Republican cause. Foreign newsmen came and went, seldom becoming resident reporters. They varied from the extremely well-briefed experienced Americans to naïve Scandinavians, cynical Frenchmen and suave Russians.[24] The Southern Irish public was not solely dependent upon RTE (the State radio and television) and the three national dailies for their news. Many British newspapers were sold in the Republic and both BBC and ITV programmes, as well as radio broadcasts, commanded wide audiences there. In the North Protestants tended to read the Newsletter while Catholics took the Irish News, representing Unionist and Irish nationalist viewpoints respectively, but some from both communities read the Belfast Telegraph that stood in the middle. Television from several sources, Britain, the Republic as well as the

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23. Some people object to the idea that reporting of law-enforcement operations should be 'balanced' between the two sides, thus blurring the distinction between lawful and unlawful action. It is not a simple issue, nor is it argued here.

24. Writer's observations and personal knowledge in Northern Ireland during the period under discussion (Personal, 1971-72).

two provincial stations, influenced people of both persuasions. Propagandists could not, therefore, aim messages to 'friends', 'neutrals' and 'enemies' through distinct and separate elements of the media. All these messages had to be scrambled and presented in a form suitable for general consumption.

Pre-Propaganda

Pre-propaganda[25] has the objective of preparing audiences for a particular action, to make individuals sensitive to some influence, to get them into condition for the time when they will effectively, and without delay or hesitation, participate in an action. It proceeds by psychological manipulations, by character modifications, by the creation of feelings or stereotypes useful when the time comes. It must be slow, continuous, imperceptible.[26] Both the communities of Northern Ireland had been subjected to such influences, such pre-propaganda, throughout their entire lives. Catholics shared with their co-religionists in the Republic the myths of Pearse and of the guerrilla war of 1919-21; Protestants believed with equal certainty in the myths of ancient battles and in their God-given right to remain separate from the South.

The organisation of Catholics and Protestants into distinct and separate schools, clubs, sporting associations, political parties and, of course, churches had two psychological effects that concern this study. It made each audience extremely susceptible to messages originating from within the group, and it insulated each community from propaganda from any external source. Manipulation of emotions and the leading of men into action were, therefore, very easily achieved in Northern Ireland, but only by leaders acceptable to the community concerned, and only in accordance with the fundamental currents and pre-existing attitudes created by pre-propaganda.

Outside of Northern Ireland the Catholic pre-propaganda was an active force in the Republic, in Irish America, and in Catholic Irish communities in Britain and elsewhere. To a certain extent it had also seeped into British perceptions, mainly through guilt association.

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25. See p18 .

26. Ellul (i), pp 30-31.

Protestant pre-propaganda had receptive audiences wherever Orange Lodges[27] existed, particularly in Scotland, but had made little or no progress outside organised groups.

The inter-communal troubles of 1968 and 1969 excited the interests of various left-wing parties, who naturally sided with the group seen to be against authority. Dr Cruise O'Brien has written:

> The Catholic-Protestant relationship and the relation of both communities to Britain have also been distorted or analysed out of existence, by various "Marxist" or post-Marxist interpretations adopted by some left-wing activists, mainly from the Catholic community, and diffused by journalists and others in contact with those activists. These interpretations vary rather widely, but a common feature is the effort to trace the evils of Northern Ireland and the Republic, to a source in British imperialism, apprehended as being as active a force now as at any time in the past ... [28]

Thus audiences in Britain and elsewhere conditioned by the pre-propaganda of Marxism were ready to respond to stimuli from acceptable spokesmen in accordance with their own fixed attitudes.

The Framework of Provisional IRA Propaganda

The insurgency that began in earnest in the summer of 1971 was apparently aimed from the start at the forcible reunification of Ireland.[29] To have hope of success the Provisionals needed to mobilise the mass of Northern Catholics in their support. This audience was suitably prepared by pre-propaganda and responded to agitation propaganda backed up by the necessary facts. Facts were made available by the security forces as they carried out searches, patrolled streets and questioned suspects in their endeavours to arrest violent activists.

For all the emotional strength of the unification issue, the Provisionals evidently decided not to use it as the main theme of their early revolutionary propaganda. Perhaps they doubted that so

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27. See p 80 .

28. Cruise O'Brien, pp 15-16.

29. Publicity Bureau, p V. Another Provisional aim was to overthrow the government of the Irish Republic.

ambitious an objective could be credible at that stage, and they may have observed that a great many Catholics in the North cherished the ideal of Irish unity alongside a massive disinclination to become personally involved in its attainment. Instead of unity the Provisionals used interim aims as the main themes of their propaganda. These included 'equal rights', 'smash Stormont rule' and 'British troops out of Northern Ireland'.

The civil rights issue had been the cause uniting many Catholics during 1968 and 1969. By infiltrating the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) the Provisionals captured a ready-made theme that already enjoyed wide acceptance. Opposition to the Protestant-dominated Northern Ireland Government based at Stormont Castle was another point upon which many Catholics were agreed. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which attracted many of the brighter political figures in the Catholic community, shared this opposition and also pursued the civil rights aim. Therefore there was hope that the Provisionals' campaign might have tacit support by a respectable political party. The theme of ridding Northern Ireland of British troops was clever. At street level it meant no more armoured vehicles driving by at night, no more uniformed men searching houses and back gardens, and an end to 'harassment'; therefore, it was bound to be attractive. On another level the theme implied, but did not explicitly demand, an end to the British connection and the reunification of Ireland. It was consonant with pre-propaganda, it drew strength from a cherished ideal without requiring immediate commitment, but it prepared people's minds for such a commitment at a later stage. A fourth theme, never so described, was hatred. Like Pearse, the Provisionals evidently believed that hatred was a sacred duty: like the IRB, they believed that violence offered the only answer.[30] To justify violence and murder, the Provisionals needed to heap discredit upon the Northern Ireland Government, security forces and all who stood in their way. Catholic school children had to rejoice

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30. See Chapter III.

at the sight of a corpse, provided it was that of an 'enemy'.[31] Foreign audiences had to believe that police and military deserved to die in Ulster, because of their brutal behaviour.

All these themes were suitable for the important North American audiences, to be reached through their Catholic Irish communities. Moreover there was never any need in that continent to be shy about the reunification issue. McGuire's remarks on the wooing of this audience make interesting reading:

> ... we were quite ready to play for all they were worth the new Republican myths that were being created out of the current campaign. And nowhere was it easier to capitalise on them than in the United States, where whole communities of Irish-Americans were watching the struggle in the Six Counties[32] like spectators at a Morality Play, with right and wrong, good and evil, delineated in black and white. After Joe Cahill's failure to enter the USA in September, we had no further difficulty, thanks to the intervention of Paul O'Dwyer and Edward Kennedy's office. (On 19 October Kennedy had made his speech saying that "Ulster was becoming Britain's Vietnam". We recognised it for the cynical piece of politics that it was, and realised that it was directed primarily at the Irish-American constituency of US politics; we wished too he had said it much earlier.) It was in the United States that our main fund-raising efforts were conducted - and the visiting speakers, who included Ruairi and John Kelly, the Dublin arms-trial man, were carefully briefed as to how the audience should be played. There should be copious references to the martyrs of 1916 and 1920-22 - the period most of the audience would be living in. Anti-British sentiment, recalling Cromwell, the potato famine, and the Black and Tans, could be profitably exploited. By no means should anything be said against the Catholic Church. And all references to Socialism should be strictly avoided. 33

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31. Clive Limpkin, a Fleet Street photographer, quotes a Bogside child's remarks after a soldier had been murdered: 'Hey mister, d'you want to photograph a dead fucker then? We've got a bastard through the head. We shot his fucking head off ... D'you want to photograph his brains, then. All over the fucking pavement then?' (Limpkin, The Battle of Bogside (Harmonsworth, England, 1972).(No pagination: four pages from the end.)

32. Because Republicans deny the legitimacy of Northern Ireland's constitution they invariably refer to the 'Six Counties'.

33. McGuire, pp 103-104.

McGuire's last note of warning points us to the second important external audience for Provisional propaganda, the political left. The chosen themes were suitable here too, being in line with revolutionary socialist assumptions. The left likened the Stormont Government to a fascist regime and sometimes to a racist, fascist dictatorship. British troops in Northern Ireland were, by Marxist interpretation, foreign aggressors, instruments of colonial or imperial repression. The official IRA was the wing with genuine communist leanings, but the Provisionals also forged working links in Britain with the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the International Socialists (IS). The Provisionals succeeded in passing themselves off simultaneously to Americans as 'freedom fighters' for 'independence' and to the left as 'freedom fighters' for world revolution.

The murders of British soldiers described by McGuire were to be the chief form of communication by the Provisionals with their third external audience, the British. This target was to be coerced, and the expectation was that the general public would sicken at the cost in lives and demand peace at any price. The second form of leverage against the British Government was to come from foreign criticism and diplomatic pressure from various governments, particularly America, and from the United Nations. Direct propaganda against the British would at the same time seek to intensify feelings of guilt and futility and stress the inevitability of Republican victory.

These interim strategic aims and propaganda themes were backed up by tactical propaganda. One sort was directed inwards, at Provisional members, another was designed to help the gunmen and bombers to carry out their tasks safely and to protect the organisation itself. This involved so far as possible disarming effective security force methods. Many other forms of tactical propaganda played lesser roles which are not dealt with in this study. The two types mentioned are best described in examples, which will come later. No real effort was made by the Provisionals to direct propaganda against Northern Protestants. Perhaps IRA leaders knew by experience or instinct that the rival group was virtually impenetrable: perhaps, like Pearse

and Connolly before 1916, the Provisionals chose simply to ignore so inconvenient a fact as the existence of one million Irish who were opposed to unification.[34]

Another element in the framework of Provisional propaganda was organisation. We have already noted how the Catholic community in Ulster was organised as a distinct group, and thus made receptive of psychological manipulation. To strengthen this mass and direct its emotions, beliefs and ideas outwards, towards the external target audiences, fronts were necessary. Some, like NICRA, existed already, and had only to be penetrated by the Provisionals and used. Others arose in response to subtle pressures. By no means were all the leaders or members of such groups Provisional supporters. They were used, nevertheless, to spread stories, promote ideas and exert pressures useful to the violent cause, and their varied and apparently innocent declared purposes disarmed suspicion and enhanced credibility. Tenants' Associations, the Belfast Central Citizens Defence Committee, the Committee for Truth, the Minority Rights Association, the Catholic Ex-Servicemen's Association, the Association for Legal Justice, the Northern Resistance Movement, the Anti-Internment League, 'Peoples' Democracy' and a number of leading Catholic politicians were all from time to time used in this way. In America the Provisionals took partial control of the charitable fund-raising organisation 'Northern Aid', diverted its funds to arms purchases and used it as a propaganda outlet. In Britain IMG, on behalf of the Provisionals, set up the 'Troops Out' movement as a front that could attract support from pacifists and others who might have hesitated to assist an overtly Trotskyite group.

The final component that gave strength to this propaganda campaign was the people themselves. Miss Honor Tracy wrote from her home in the Republic with this impression:

> The charitable might say that the Irish tend not to minimise their sufferings; the candid that they are shocking old cry babies. If anyone lays a finger on them the world must hear of it with embellishment. And like children they believe in their own fantasies ... Furthermore, nothing that happens, no action

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34. See Chapter III.

> of troops or police, relates in any way to anything done by themselves. Nothing is ever their fault, nor do they ever do wrong. 35

As natural propagandists these people were wonderful, as many journalists, observers and politicians new to Ulster were to discover.

An Outline of Events, July 1971-March 1972

The nine month period that is the subject of this study began with SDLP leaders threatening that their party would boycott the Northern Ireland Parliament after two civilians had been shot dead by troops in Londonderry riots.[36] It now seems clear that the Party, which carried out its threat soon afterwards, was intimidated by the Provisionals. With its elected representatives cut off from normal political activity, the Catholic community could more easily be persuaded to look to the Provisionals as their natural leaders. The same action intensified the 'Smash Stormont' theme. The Londonderry riots in which two men had died exemplified Provisional tactics at that time, which aimed to bring the maximum number of Catholics into violent conflict with security forces, to commit them by their actions to the propaganda of the cause. The deaths also illustrated the dangers that exist when troops instead of police have to deal with such situations.

Riot action was accompanied by increased sniper and bomb attacks. The Electricity Board's headquarters in Belfast was blown up, with many civilian casualties. Coming on top of 134 bomb attacks in the period April-June, the violence angered Ulster Protestants who demanded tougher and more effective security measures. Army and police found it difficult to prevent IRA attacks, as the insurgents held the initiative and enjoyed protection in Catholic areas. Intelligence was weak, and even when the identity of activists was well known IRA intimidation prevented witnesses giving evidence or juries convicting. The security of Northern Ireland seemed to be slipping out of control.

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35. Honor Tracy, letter to Sunday Telegraph (London, 28 November 1971).

36. See Insight Team, Chapter 15.

In an effort to restore the situation and regain the initiative, the Westminster and Stormont governments sanctioned the introduction of internment. This was an administrative measure enabling known extremists to be detained without normal legal processes. The idea was to mount a large arrest operation that would round-up so many leading Provisionals and Official IRA members that the violent attack would be blunted, and by careful interrogation of key internees to gather the badly needed intelligence. The operation began early on the morning of 9 August 1971. 342 suspects were arrested. The IRA reacted unwisely in the military sense by coming onto the streets of Belfast and fighting open gun battles with troops, in which they lost heavily. In the propaganda field their reactions,which are described later, were much better. With hindsight the internment operation, at any rate in its timing and size, can be seen as an over-reaction by the authorities which played into Provisional hands. According to some accounts, senior army officers expressed reservations prior to the event, which were overridden for political reasons.

Between August 1971 and the end of that year the Provisional campaign relied upon the actions of 'active service units' and the publicity so gained. The technique of mass confrontations took second place and Catholics were persuaded to back the IRA by refusing co-operation to the security forces, and by making propaganda. The active service units made dozens of bomb attacks, sniped at troops and police, set mines and booby-traps, assassinated political opponents, and created as much mayhem as they were able. The security force response relied upon arrest, interrogation and, where appropriate, internment, in an endeavour to build up intelligence and thin Provisional ranks. In October a massive effort was made to block unauthorised crossing-places between Ulster and the Republic, but this had almost no effect in reducing the import of arms and explosives or in stopping cross-border raids by IRA units based in the South.

As the months went by and the IRA lost many of its key leaders and operators through internment it showed signs of fearing for its credibility as a military threat to Northern Ireland's security. The Westminster and Stormont governments were also under pressure because successes in the security battle had been gained at some cost in international prestige and domestic confidence. By the end of 1971 revolutionary propaganda had persuaded sections of the Westminster

Opposition that security policy in Ulster was unjust and 'counter-productive'. The issue of credibility thus became crucial to both sides.

In the New Year the Provisionals apparently placed renewed emphasis on mass confrontations between Catholics and security forces. NICRA and other groups were possibly encouraged to challenge authority by organising illegal marches. On 30 January 1972 thirteen civilians were shot dead by the army in the aftermath of such a march in an incident known as 'Bloody Sunday'. Many Catholics North and South reacted by renewing their support for IRA violence, and international opinion was critical of Britain. On 24 March 1972 the British Government suspended the Stormont Government and appointed a Secretary of State to administer 'Direct Rule' over the Province.

Aspects of Provisional Propaganda

The Provisionals in August 1971 had anticipated the introduction of internment, which had been used earlier both in Ulster and in the Republic.[37] Besides arranging for important members to evade arrest they laid the groundwork for an efficient propaganda campaign to discredit the measure the moment it was introduced. They also relied on the combined effect of the facts of internment and their interpretation of those facts to complete the mobilisation of the Catholic masses behind their rebellion. Internment became an important tactical propaganda theme, contributing to the tasks of discrediting the security forces and inciting hatred. This section examines aspects of Provisional propaganda that characterised the psychological campaign in the nine months under study.

The Provisionals appreciated that their credibility depended upon their being able to sustain a high level of violence, to deprive the security forces of success, and to shift the burden of guilt from their own shoulders onto others, and to demonstrate that a Republican victory was inevitable. Continued violence would only be possible if activists could be kept alive and kept out of prison. Tactical propaganda was used to make the security forces' job more difficult

37. During the IRA campaign in the 1950s 187 suspects were interned in Ulster and 206 in the Republic.

and whenever possible to deter or discredit effective weapons, methods, units and leaders. In the case of weapons, the technique was either to condemn as lethal or ridicule as ineffective. The lines that follow, from a book written after the events, catch the spirit of this attack.

The author described the soldier's self-loading rifle as 'a weapon of unbelievable power and range, ill-suited for urban work and a killer by shock if not by direct hit'.[38] For riot control when lethal effects were not required, security forces relied upon CS smoke to clear the streets of trouble-makers. CS smoke, however, was 'choking, drifting, alientating, political, radicalising'.[39] In their search for something less 'political', the soldiers introduced rubber baton rounds, fired from riot guns. These however were condemned, as 'a strange, Alice-in-Wonderland sort of weapon ... "I just don't know what they're coming to," mumbled one reporter from the Observer at the press show, "firing bullets made of rubber. Soon they'll be lobbing grenades full of confetti, and guns that fire rose petals" '.[40] IRA weapons, on the other hand, were described in lyrical terms. 'To watch the ball of fire weaving softly through the late afternoon light, smashing on the ground in front of a soldier who became covered in a mass of liquid gold and sent running and falling back to safe ground, his uniform dropping off his legs in great gobbets of fibred orange, was ample testimony to the strength of the (fire-bomb) weapon.'[41]

The Provisionals drilled the Catholics to cover up whenever security forces shot an insurgent. Almost invariably such an event set this procedure in motion. The man's weapon was spirited away. The victim was taken where he could be cleaned of any forensic or other evidence indicating the use of a firearm. 'Eye witnesses' were briefed and presented to news reporters. Their evidence hardly ever varied: the civilian had been unarmed, innocent of any offence, and

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38. Simon Winchester In Holy Terror (London, 1974), p 86.
39. Winchester, p 69.
40. Winchester, p 88.
41. Winchester, p 58.

the soldier's shot had been unwarranted. In short, the army had committed murder. This, it was hoped, would discredit the army and deter soldiers from opening fire on terrorists in future. Reporters are accustomed to confused and contradictory versions of any incident. It is one of their skills to sort out truth from error. Few newsmen could bring themselves to believe that every civilian was lying. In consequence the army's case, often resting on a single witness, was routinely called into question. Only after many months in Northern Ireland did one experienced reporter conclude:

> I speak as someone of Irish extraction on both sides, yet even I am surprised on occasions at the instant and expert mendacity to which journalists and no doubt other interested parties such as the police and security forces are treated in episodes of this sort. [42]

The internment issue fitted easily into the Provisionals' propaganda. Detention without trial did offend many consciences in Britain and elsewhere and by guilt association the measure could be used as a means of undermining confidence in the whole legal and moral basis of the security operation.[43] The very fact that it had been introduced with some reluctance by a Government that was anxious as soon as possible to abolish the measure made it difficult to defend, other than on the grounds of sheer necessity, which in itself strengthened insurgent credibility. To Catholic and foreign audiences it could be presented by the IRA as evidence of British repression, and the fact that it was used initially only against Catholics assisted this argument. In the Republic a pop group recorded a song entitled 'The Men Behind the Wire' which became immediately popular amongst

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42. Tony Geraghty, symposium 'Terrorism and the Media' at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (London, 6 July 1977). (From the transcript).

43. The ethical aspects of internment are not argued here. It may however be noted that in 1974 Lord Gardiner headed a commission of inquiry into the system and reached the conclusion that detention (another name for internment) was essential in the circumstances, and that on 18 January 1978 the European Court of Human Rights found that internment did not involve the derogation of normal rights beyond 'the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation'. (reported Times (London, 19 January 1978), p 5)

Catholics North and South. Beginning with 'Armoured cars and tanks and guns came to take away our sons' the lyrics ended, 'Every man will stand behind the men behind the wire.'

As time went by the Provisionals appeared divided in their own minds as to whether internment was of benefit on account of its propaganda value, or a menace because of its weakening effect on their military capability. The same debate, in reverse, occupied security leaders. During the period of this study, it is likely that the damage to IRA effectiveness was the overriding factor in Provisional leaders' minds, and the propaganda campaign to end internment had a practical as well as a psychological purpose. The booklet Belfast, August 1971: A Case to be Answered, published by the Independent Labour Party[44] shortly after the introduction of internment provided publicity helpful to this campaign. Allegations of security force misbehaviour were by this publication carried to a wide public by authors whose credibility was high. The fact that police and military had made no plans to defend their reputations, being at that time still insensitive of the propaganda threat, exposed them to many attacks of this sort. Moreover insufficient care was taken to ensure that stupidity and rough behaviour were completely absent from the internment operation, with the result that Republican propaganda contained the grains of truth essential for success. Many Catholics were shocked because some of those arrested were known members of civil rights or other non-violent organisations. The authorities insisted that such individuals were also covert members of the IRA. Friends and relatives, aware only of the non-violent association, were genuinely outraged at arrests that seemed aimed, in a sectarian manner, at political and community organisations. The insurgents balanced their immediate losses in manpower by a tide of sympathy which stimulated recruiting and area support.

Internment had been expected but the method of interrogation used by the authorities against selected suspects had not. Nevertheless the Provisionals reacted quickly, presumably appreciating both the

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44. Danny Kennally and Eric Preston Belfast, August 1971: A Case to be Answered (London, 1971).

value of the material offered as propaganda, and the threat to their organisation posed by an efficient intelligence tool. Of the 12 individuals subjected to what is now known as 'interrogation in depth', one was released immediately afterwards as being unconnected with violence. The other 11 were interned in the Long Kesh camp where visitors were permitted. McGuire describes how statements by the 11 were smuggled out of Long Kesh and passed to the Sunday Times 'Insight' Team of investigative journalists.[45] Secrecy made this an exciting 'story', strengthened by official denials and evasions. All this was on top of the brutality allegations arising from internment. In the face of public disquiet, the Government ordered an inquiry. With two exceptions civilian witnesses boycotted the proceedings, but security force witnesses gave evidence. When the report[46] was published, the interrogation methods were listed in full. Security forces were ordered not to use them further,[47] the moral foundation of the security operation suffered, and, because on this key issue the allegations had been proved correct, all the stories of ill-treatment attracted a little more attention.[48] The credibility of the 'Insight' Team was lifted and the mutual advantages to journalists and Republicans of joint operations of this kind did not go unnoticed.

The man who had been released after interrogation had a special propaganda value. Here was a spokesman who could claim with honesty to be innocent of violent association but who had been 'tortured' by the security forces. The National Broadcasting Corporation of America

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45. Mc Guire, p 73.

46. Home Office Report of the Enquiry into Allegations against the Security Forces of Physical Brutality in Northern Ireland arising out of events on the 9 August 1971, Cmnd 4823, (London, 1971).

47. Prime Minister's Office Report of the Committee of Privy Counsellors appointed to consider Authorised Procedures for the Interrogation of Persons suspected of Terrorism, Cmnd 4901 - The Parker Committee (London, 1972).

48. The debate over whether or not the interrogation methods amounted to 'ill-treatment' or to 'torture' reached its legal limit on 18 January 1978 when the European Court of Human Rights ruled by 13 votes to 4 that 'the five techniques did not constitute a practice of torture'. Times (London, 19 January 1978), p 5. By that time, however, the damage to Britain's reputation was done.

had a film crew in Belfast and the witness was hurried before the camera. His piece supported perfectly one of the themes projected in the film, that ill-treatment was meted out by British soldiers to Catholics for no reason other than their being Catholics.[49]

This brutality propaganda was not completely to the Provisionals advantage. Tales of torture under interrogation and cruelty by police and military affected IRA rank and file as well as the general public. Here they inspired fear, which had the effect of making arrested members 'sing' the moment they fell into police or army hands.[50] Thus the military side of the security operation gained a little from the unwanted side effects of an over-successful revolutionary propaganda theme.

As the security operation squeezed the Provisionals, a series of tactical propaganda targets were engaged by the Republican front organisations with a view to easing the pressure. Any method, unit, or individual that was particularly effective was singled out for attack. The part-time Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) was high on this list, being seen perhaps as a bulwark against a Provisional seizure of power in the event of a British withdrawal. This volunteer force was non-sectarian in its obligations, operations and original composition. In order to weaken and discredit it, the Provisionals mounted a campaign to terrorise Catholic members, many of whom had in practice to choose between resignation and death. This was largely successful, and after its first year the Regiment was left with few Catholic members. Immediately the Republican propaganda machine claimed that the UDR was a tool of Protestant domination, which should therefore be disbanded. Amongst full-time units, the Parachute Regiment was singled out for the most bitter attacks. Brigadier Frank Kitson, commander of the brigade in Belfast and author of a book[51] on countering insurgency, was slandered, possibly because his methods were proving particularly successful.

Since the army was having to do the police job in Catholic areas, it adopted certain police methods. Patrolling in uniform or in military

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49. NBC film Suffer the Little Children, (New York, 1972).

50. Charters (iii), p 24.

51. See Kitson, op cit.

vehicles was useful for certain purposes and essential for some. The limitations were obvious: such patrols proclaimed their identity and enabled insurgents to take evasive action, and they also provided easy targets for snipers waiting in ambush. McGuire noted that 'British soldiers were very vulnerable, as are any uniformed force in guerilla war. Our Volunteers could recognise them; whereas they could never be sure who amongst the civilians around them was a friend, who enemy'.[52] No policeman who wanted to keep a discreet lookout for a dangerous suspect in a London public house would operate in uniform. Thus for certain tasks the army patrolled in plain clothes. Presumably because this was successful, it was attacked. Plain clothes patrols were described as 'Special Assassination Squads' and this theme was taken up by some Irish papers. Concern was shown by several UK news reporters, who seemed incapable of distinguishing between belligerent status and a police action, and were apparently willing to grant the IRA all the advantages of both, while reserving the disadvantages to the army.[53]

Also under attack were elements of intelligence gathering, such as the accumulation of data on house ownership and occupation, patterns of activity in IRA 'base areas' and personal information about suspects. All this was described as 'harassment' and was made the subject of continual complaints by respectable spokesmen, many speaking from sincere concern, to all who would listen in government, police and military circles. It is a government servant's duty to listen to such criticism, and endless time and energy was devoted to trying to uncover the truth about this complaint or that. In all probability, some complaints were true. No instrument as blunt as an army can be used for such a delicate task without mistakes of policy or execution, or without some of its members from time to time acting stupidly or unlawfully. One outcome of the Provisionals' propaganda was to deny justice to the genuine, by swamping the apparatus of

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52. McGuire, p 70.

53. An interview of Lieutenant-Colonel Evele gh by Nicholas Woolley, BBC Radio on 27 September 1972 showed that the theme outlasted the period of this study. Woolley saw it as illegal, and if not illegal, improper for the army to operate in plain clothes.

inquiry with a mass of bogus allegations. The IRA prevented Catholics from giving statements to the RUC that might lead to legal action, from fear that such action might restore confidence in the impartial administration of justice in Ulster, which their propaganda denied.[54] Writing about the propaganda tussle, Dr Cruise O'Brien noted that journalists:

> were more likely to have been conned by Catholics than by Protestants, because Catholics - in common probably with most underdogs - are more given to ingenious explanations, things-are-not-what-they-seem theory and all those forms of 'inside dope' that best deserve that description ... The Catholic cause might be thought to benefit by this, and so it does - in terms of the media. But in fact the community that stands in the greater danger from the worsening of the crisis is the minority community - the Catholics - and its short-term propaganda victories worsen its danger and increase its tribulations. 55

Early in the campaign a senior army spokesman remarked that the gun-fights that had followed internment together with the arrests themselves had seriously weakened the IRA. Technically, he was correct. However the news media interpreted the statement as being an official claim that the Provisionals were nearly beaten, which their continued acts of violence showed was certainly not the case. This caused the same sort of friction between media and military that had existed in Vietnam prior to the Tet offensive, a resentment at what newsmen considered to be official attempts to paint a rosier picture than circumstances justified. The Provisionals were alert to the benefits to be gained by acts timed to upstage any security force word or action that smacked of self-congratulation. During the same army press conference at which the contentious remarks were made, the Provisional leader in Belfast, Joe Cahill, boldly invited journalists to his rival conference in another part of the city. Four months later, when the GOC was speaking to the press at his headquarters, twelve bombs were let off in nearby Belfast. Of this exercise Maria McGuire wrote: 'We drove him off the front pages of the Belfast Evening Telegraph with a dozen bomb explosions in Belfast, demonstrating very clearly just who was winning in the Six Counties'.[56]

54. Personal, 1971-72.

55. Cruise O'Brien, p 263.

56. Mc Guire, p 75.

These pre-arranged demonstrations were on occasions supplemented by 'off-the-cuff' reaction to steal the headlines back from the security forces after the latter had scored a success. A quick bombing operation, timed to catch the 9 pm television news and next morning's newspapers, was the commonest form, but ingenuity did not end there. On 13 November 1971 the army in Belfast arrested two much-wanted Provisionals, Martin Meehan and Dutch Docherty. That evening the Press Association in London received a call from the Provisionals in Londonderry to say that a private soldier in the Royal Anglian Regiment, whom they named, had deserted to them and had passed on information which would enable them to arrest an Irish-born military agent operating in their midst. The Press Association checked the story with the army's Northern Ireland Information Desk. There was no way that the information officer could give an immediate answer: he had to contact the Regiment. In the event the Royal Anglians responded rapidly and were able to report that the soldier named was on leave in Essex. However he had, three weeks earlier, lost his paybook, and this had evidently finished up in IRA hands. Responsible reaction on the Agency's part coupled with quick checking by the army killed the story. Nevertheless the inventiveness, plausibility and timing of the propagandist concerned excite admiration.[57]

Some of the themes and techniques already mentioned are more easily understood by example. The relatively small, tragic event described below illustrates how Provisional propagandists strove to make capital even out of operations that had gone awry in the military sense.[58]

At 4 am on the morning of Saturday 23 October 1971 a car driven by a man with two women in the back seat crashed through an army check point in Cape Street, Lower Falls, Belfast and as it continued on up the road two shots were fired out of the car at the soldiers. The fire was returned and the two women occupants were killed. The car was stopped some distance from the troops and was immediately surrounded by local Catholics. One such, a member of the

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57. The writer visited Northern Ireland in October 1977 to research this chapter, (Visit, 1977); this story researched then.

58. Personal, 1971-72.

Central Citizens' Defence Committee (CCDC) was on hand to take photographs, and it transpired later that he had been making a tape recording of the incident. Any weapon used in the car was evidently removed and the crowd when questioned were agreed that no one in the car had been armed, and that the army's shooting had not been justified. The two victims, it was said, were innocent of any violent connection.

The facts were reported by the military in the normal way to headquarters. During the course of the telephoned account it was mentioned that the two dead women were dressed in slacks, in a rather masculine manner. Anguished no doubt by the deaths of women in the course of military action, the duty officer who received the message placed undue emphasis on the masculine style of dress. He passed the report to the information desk with the observation that the deceased 'had both been dressed in male clothes'. The information officer composed what he believed to be a factually correct press release which included those words. By so doing he inadvertently weakened the army's position and exposed the statement to question.

One woman in fact had worn white slacks, loose blouse, navy jacket and shoes; her sister (for that was the relationship) was in blue jeans, black and white spotted blouse, navy jerkin and knee-length laced boots.[59] By no means were they 'dressed in male clothes' other than by wearing unisex slacks rather than feminine skirts. This flaw in the army's statement was seized by Republicans and a journalist from the Republic organised a press conference under CCDC sponsorship at which the army was accused of opening fire without justification.

The army, although acting on the police's behalf, was nevertheless treated before the Law merely as a party in the incident. If the soldiers' statements lacked credibility and the civilian version seemed strong, then the men who fired the fatal shots might be prosecuted. No other arrangement seemed possible if the security operation was to be conducted within the law. If shots had been fired from inside the car, chemical tests might have confirmed this. However this police

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59. Irish Times (Dublin, 25 October 1971).

forensic evidence, which alone might have reinforced the soldiers' story, had to be kept confidential until called for by a coroner or other authorised law officer. In the 'trial by television' that was about to open, the army was to be without this evidence.

Reacting to the CCDC press conference, the army's Information Staff arranged its own at the nearby headquarters of the company involved in the shooting. The company commander had been close to the action and he gave interviews to TV reporters and answered questions from the press. One of the British television companies had its film destroyed when their laboratory processed it in the wrong fluid. So late in the evening the weary major had to speak out for his soldiers yet again. The twist to the story is that, while waiting for the second interview to be arranged, the TV reporter met someone with inside knowledge of police matters. This individual told him that the forensic tests were positive. Thus, at the second interview, the interviewee felt sure that his soldiers had acted correctly but could not prove it, while the interviewer had reason to think the same way but could not say it. The strength of the army's case rested at that moment on the credibility of its main spokesman, the major, which was high. The Republican spokesman also made a convincing story. The viewing public formed their verdicts around this evidence and their own preconceptions.

Whilst the security forces were constrained by legal, security, political, financial and other factors when arguing their case, the Provisionals, too, had their problems. One arose during the incident of the two dead women, and it forced them on the Monday after the shooting to sweep the ground from under their own feet so far as propaganda was concerned. Most recruits to the Provisional IRA were Christians. Christianity forbids murder. To resolve the moral dilemma the IRA claimed the status of an army, which was the main theme of tactical propaganda directed inwards at the membership. Its members were 'volunteers' or 'officers' carrying out military duties in a 'just war'. Important to their morale were three beliefs. First, that if 'taken prisoner' by security forces they would, by one means or another, be set free at the end of 'hostilities'; second, that reasonable care would be exerted to lessen the chances of their being 'killed in action'; and third, if in spite of all, they were

killed, martyrdom awaited them. The younger of the two dead women, Miss Dorothy Maguire, was a 'staff officer' in the Belfast Provisionals. Her sister, Mrs Meehan, dying with her in the course of an attack upon 'the British Forces of Occupation', had earned a share of glory. Family pressures, and the need not to be seen by their rank and file as indifferent to the dues of martyrdom apparently caused IRA leaders to agree that proper respects should be paid. The Tuesday 26 October edition of The Irish News contained 81 obituary notices to the dead women, Typically, one read:

> MEEHAN - The Officers and Staff of Cumann Na mBan, Brigade Staff (Bealfeirste), regret to learn of the death of Mrs Maura Meehan (shot by British Forces of Occupation), sister of Staff Officer Dorothy Maguire and tender to her husband and family their deepest sympathy. A lamh dheis De go rabh a anamanne. 60

A military style IRA funeral followed.[61] The unspoken contract had been honoured, at some cost to credibility. A year later a coroner's court made public the forensic evidence.

Church leaders in both communities tried hard to lead their people away from violence. In his address on New Year's Day 1972, the Bishop of Ardegh and Clonmacnois, the Most Rev Dr Daly, said that it was one of the sad paradoxes of our time that the demythologising of war had been accompanied by what amounted to a remythologising of revolutionary violence. 'A new myth is being manufactured in our time - the myth of romantic revolution ... the ideologues and theoreticians are its promoters, the young and idealistic are it dupes, the weak and the little men, the children, and the old and defenceless, are its victims.'[62] However there were priests who saw things differently. The Rev Patrick Campbell, of Swinford, County Mayo, advised the Bishop that 'controlled violence can be used as a counter-measure of existing institutionalised or legitimised violence ... the IRA in this context have engaged in the use of controlled force'.[63]

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60. Irish News (Belfast, 26 October 1971).
61. A military funeral lends 'legitimacy' to the IRA's claim to be an army.
62. Irish Times (Dublin, 3 January 1972).
63. Irish Times (Dublin, 4 January 1972).

Security Force Counter-Measures

Neither the RUC nor the army in Northern Ireland in 1971 was equipped by organisation, training or experience to cope with the propaganda weapon that supported the IRA's offensive. Hasty measures had to be adopted and new methods learned by trial and error. Normal army public relations staffs were skilled in dealing with press enquiries and in promoting the army's image in a society free of mass indoctrination. This was not the same as bearing the brunt of a sophisticated propaganda attack. In the RUC 'PR' itself was a completely new idea. At first there was a tendency, in the RUC, to hostility towards a news media that seemed to many police officers as implacably biased against the Force and, in the army, to disdainfulness about IRA methods so far removed from the military ethic. Pressure for change came from the troops and their officers, who objected to having their every act misrepresented without apparent challenge, and from journalists, who explained their need of frank on-the-spot military accounts if their reports were to be accurate.[64]

On 22 August a military patrol arrested some wanted men from a house in McCauley Street, Belfast. There was no resistance and the little operation went without incident. Later, a TV reporter telephoned the army Information Service at Headquarters to say that his crew had just filmed the wrecked interior of the house concerned and recorded interviews with witnesses alleging army brutality and vandalism. Did the army have anything to say in its defence? The unit was contacted and facts ascertained: there had been neither violence nor damage. So far in the campaign, the Information Desk would have been content to issue a statement in rebuttal of the allegations, and even such a statement might have been circumscribed by the obligation not to pre-empt any legal action or claims for compensation. Thus the revolutionary propaganda would have gone out in the form of convincing visual and aural evidence while the security force response, if given at all, would consist merely of a hesitant denial by a faceless spokesman. On this occasion, however, the information officer on duty took a bold decision: he invited the company commander and the non-commissioned

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64. Visit, 1977.

officer in charge of the arrest party to offer their versions of events to the TV crews and press reporters. They were advised to speak only of facts known first-hand, and to avoid being drawn into speculation. The media responded, filmed or recorded the military witnesses, and balanced their reports accordingly. The NCO was able to show that the windows of the smashed room had all been broken outwards into the street, a fact at variance with the statements by Catholic witnesses that the army had broken in through these windows. Viewers drew their own conclusions.[65]

This response may seem to the reader as completely straightforward, and so it was. Yet at the time it involved a break with military regulation and tradition that caused much anxiety. The rules were quite clear. No serviceman could speak to the news media on controversial or political matters: a commanding officer could speak on purely domestic matters like unit sports, or amateur dramatics within his own command.[66] Beyond that, no utterance was permitted. Anything that troops did in Northern Ireland was liable to be both controversial and political, particularly if it was news-worthy. Therefore comment was forbidden. The likelihood of commanding officers being on the scene of every controversial event involving men of their units was small. To be credible, a witness must speak from first-hand knowledge. Therefore the forbidden statement had to be made by a forbidden spokesman. The policy that came to be adopted allowed such statements when it seemed likely that the facts known to a military witness might correct false versions put about by hostile propaganda. The rules were bent, not abandoned. American experience in Vietnam, where the apparently uncontrolled statements by a minority of servicemen damaged the national reputation, discouraged the British from any policy of laissez-faire.[67]

Interviews did not replace the need for police and military press desks able to answer media enquiries promptly and accurately. Accuracy

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65. Visit, 1977.

66. Ministry of Defence Queen's Regulations for the Army, 1961, paragraphs J 12-015 - 12-021.

67. Personal, 1971-72.

depended upon reliable reporting of facts up the chain of operational command, backed up when possible by a direct check between the press desk at headquarters and the unit press officer, a lieutenant or captain, on the spot. The army's credibility suffered on a number of occasions as a result of lazy checking and reporting of facts, leading to an incomplete or inaccurate press release which later had to be changed. Such alterations were apt to be interpreted as 'cover ups' or contrivance, with consequent damage to credibility and trust. In its performance over detail and accuracy, the British Army in 1971 and 1972 exposed a weakness.

The need to counter hostile propaganda began to influence military planning and operations at all levels. The 'public opinion factor' found its way into those convoluted but efficient tools of decision-making, the 'appreciation of the situation'. Briefings down to private soldiers included warnings of likely Republican propaganda attacks and the consequent need to avoid any word or deed capable of misrepresentation. The staff attempted to analyse Provisional and other militant propaganda themes so that all ranks, forewarned, might be forearmed. The information staff continued to issue factual press statements on incidents as they occurred, and fuller briefings were provided when required for journalists and other opinion-formers, designed to explain the purpose of various security force methods. Each military unit appointed a unit press officer and courses were arranged prior to Northern Ireland tours at which these officers were lectured by professional newsmen so that the problems and needs of the media would be appreciated. Army information staff officers were posted to the three brigade headquarters in Ulster to complement the endeavours of the information staff at headquarters. Some officers who were shortly to serve in Northern Ireland were trained to speak effectively on television.[68]

Experience indicated that professionalism was best achieved by staffs composed of professional military and police officers temporarily involved in public relations, together with professional journalists or PR men for the time being working with the army or police. At all stages the military sought political guidance, when

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68. Visit, 1977.

this was required, from the appropriate department of state, a need which was much more easily met after the political reorganisation of March 1972 than under divided control. The RUC information staffs were, of course, bound by the law making the police solely responsible to the Courts. This important distinction between police and army status made impossible the formation of joint RUC-Army information desks, on the lines favoured in earlier counter-insurgency operations.[69]

Through their respective information staffs police and military attempted to get false Provisional and other extremist statements corrected by accurate reports and to offer for media consideration facts, statistics, occasional interviews or press conference with senior officers, and opportunities to see the work of security forces at first hand. A journalist who blackened his face and hands and accompanied a corporal and six soldiers on a patrol through darkened streets threatened by terrorist snipers and booby-traps was better able to judge for himself the behaviour and attitudes of the troops, the provocation and danger, as well as the security problems of countering insurgency.[70] None of these measures worked miracles overnight but they did deprive the Provisionals of their sovereignty in the field of propaganda. Their 'most powerful and least fought arm' was encountering competition.

Security force spokesmen stressed the themes that the IRA were criminals guilty of murder and other offences, that the army was operating in support of the police to restore law and order, and was not fighting a war, that police and military were impartial between Catholics and Protestants, and were opposing violence from wherever it might come. Facts on IRA brutality were publicised, and lies exposed. Catholic rejection of IRA domination, which began in earnest after direct rule, was given publicity. Security forces felt that they were retaining the loyalty and trust of the British population, for all that many at home wished that troops could be withdrawn. So long as British policy remained more or less in line with Protestant hopes, security force messages seemed to be accepted by that community. When,

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69. Personal, 1971-72.

70. Ibid.

however, there was a conflict of interest, that group was as difficult to influence as the Catholics were throughout.[71]

No attempts were made to direct the thoughts of officers and soldiers serving or due to serve in Northern Ireland. Instead the Army Education Service encouraged study of as wide a range of published work as practicable, from Bernadette Devlin to James Callaghan, in the hope that military reaction to current events would be informed by broad general knowledge and understanding. Unhappily the soldier's lot was almost always to deal with extremists and their supporters, so that a unit serving a tour in a Protestant district tended to end up in sympathy with the Catholics, and vice versa. Nor were the techniques of lavage de crâne and bourrage de crâne[72] applied in the internment centres. Critics have generally agreed that any attempt to force liberal ideas into bigoted heads would have been mistaken. At the same time some have objected to an arrangement that apparently permitted senior extremists to dominate the inmates and turn these centres into 'universities of terrorism'.

The Issue of Credibility

By the end of 1971 the issue of credibility seemed to have become vital to both sides.[73] The Provisionals needed to end internment and recover their best leaders and activists, but the need had to be hidden behind a veneer of confidence and sustained capability. The authorities, whose security campaign at that time rested upon internment, had to convince the doubting British public and influential opinion elsewhere that their strategy was working and deserved continued support. In this struggle the IRA benefited from the instant psychological effect of 'news', whereas the authorities needed time.[74]

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71. Personal 1971-72.

72. See p 200.

73. In December 1971 two journalists, one Irish and one British, approached respectively a senior civil servant and a senior Army officer to ask their reactions to 'purely hypothetical terms' for a ceasefire. (Personal, 1971-72.)

74. See Ellul (i), pp 45-47: 'This situation makes the "current-events man" a ready target for propaganda ... lacking landmarks, he follows all currents. He is unstable because he runs after what happened today; he relates to the event, and therefore cannot resist any impulse coming from that event.'

The Provisionals, therefore, strained every nerve to keep up a high level of violence, while striving to convince British opinion that, besides being immoral, and in addition to its acting as a binding force between the IRA and Catholics generally, internment was a failure as a means of countering insurgency.

It was not too difficult to get such a message across in the Republic. After describing 'a veritable blitz on Belfast ... ripping entire buildings apart', the Irish Press reporter Vincent Browne remarked, 'The weekend certainly discredited recent statements made by Lord Balneil, Mr John Taylor, Mr Harold Wilson and Mr Cathal Goulding that the Provisional IRA was on its last legs and that the end of violence was near'.[75] Subsequent events are described by McGuire:

> There was a further press conference due on 20 December - this time it was the turn of the Commander of the British troops in the Six Counties, Major-General Sir Harry Tuzo, to give his assessment of the campaign against us. And so, on 19 December, we held our own press conference in Dublin, in which we said that our organisation had not been seriously affected by internment, our supplies of arms and ammunition were still intact, and that the British Army was powerless to prevent our operations. Naturally these claims were put to Tuzo the next day - our tactic of compelling other people to react to us, and not the other way round. 76

Aware, no doubt, that the Dublin conference might be less than convincing for British audiences, the Provisionals on the same day mounted what can be interpreted from hindsight as a special operation designed to get their message across to this important target.

The Dublin audience were subjected to what may have been rather blatant propaganda. Elsewhere, however, the shrewd and experienced Mr Simon Winchester, Guardian resident reporter in Northern Ireland, was treated to a far more subtle briefing by Provisional spokesmen. His piece appeared next day under the headlines 'Provisional IRA in Confident Mood'[77] and illustrates rather nicely Dr Cruise O'Brien's

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75. Irish Press (Dublin, 29 November 1971).

76. McGuire, p 75 (The GOC's correct rank was Lieutenant-General).

77. Guardian (Manchester, 20 December 1971).

'things-are-not-what-they-seem theory and all those forms of "inside dope" that best deserve that description'. The report incorporated the themes of over confidence on the part of senior military leaders, the ineffectiveness of security force operations, the failure of internment to erode the Provisionals' capability, the strength of Catholic support for the IRA, army atrocities and stupidity, the insurgents' 1971 success story, the paucity of intelligence available to the authorities and the weak returns from interrogation. Overlaying all these and repeated continually throughout the piece was the key theme, the invincibility of the Provisional IRA and that organisation's capability to continue its campaign indefinitely. 'But on the evidence of meetings I had yesterday with three leading officers and a number of volunteers from the Belfast Provisionals, the British Army[78] still has a confident, capable, and cheerful enemy with which to reckon', Winchester wrote, going on to quote a Provisional as saying: ' "We can and will step up the campaign as and when we like. Recruits are coming in all the time ... Above all, the morale of the men is higher than ever before" '.[79] And so on. The story nowhere stated where the meeting was held, but appearing under a Belfast date-line one possible deduction was that Winchester had enjoyed his 'pleasant and civilised lunch'[80] with the Provisional 'officers' under the very noses of what readers were presumably expected to see as incompetent, hamfisted security forces.

Three years later a book written by Winchester[81] threw interesting new light on the briefing. The 'pleasant and civilised lunch' was held in the safety of Dundalk, a small town just south of the border with the Republic. When it was nearly over the senior Provisional host was summoned to the telephone to be warned by John Stephenson,[82] the organisation's chief in Dublin, that Winchester

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78. Republicans refer always to 'the British Army', implying that it is an army of occupation in Northern Ireland.

79. Guardian (20 December 1971).

80. Guardian (20 December 1971).

81. Winchester, op cit.

82. Otherwise known as Sean MacStiofain.

might be spying for the British, and was to be got rid of at once.[83] 'I began to worry', wrote Winchester, 'and to perspire'.[84] 'My contact was kept behind with the officers for a new minutes, and then ran out to join me, looking pale and sick. "Quick, drive north as fast as you can", he yelled as he climbed into the car. "Those boys think you're a soldier!" '.[85] One is left to ponder why this dramatic and newsworthy part of the story was withheld from the Guardian, and to contemplate what effect, if any, intimidation had upon the integrity of journalistic reporting.

The issue of credibility was overshadowed at the end of January 1972 by an event which focused critical world attention upon Britain's position in Northern Ireland and led two months later to a change of policy.

'Bloody Sunday' and its Aftermath

In August 1971, responding to appeals from leading Catholics, the Stormont Government had imposed a ban on marches in the Province. At the end of 1971 NICRA, with the support of Miss Bernadette Devlin and several senior SDLP politicians, challenged the ban and organised demonstrations and marches protesting against internment and other government measures. Some observers believed that the Provisional IRA encouraged and supported this move, seeing it as a way to bring the Catholic masses back into the forefront of the struggle. The policy got off to a slow start, but a clash between marchers and soldiers outside a new internment camp at Magilligan, County Londonderry, attracted publicity that ensured a good turn-out for a march arranged by NICRA to take place in Londonderry on Sunday, 30 January 1972.

The Bogside and Creggan areas of Londonderry, which together compose most of the Catholic part of the city, had for several months been without proper security force control as a result of an agreement between security officials and community representatives. The hope had been that restraint and inactivity on the part of police and military would be matched by peace and quiet within the Catholic areas. The

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83. Winchester, pp 183-184.

84. Winchester, p 183.

85. Winchester, p 183.

IRA had filled the vacuum and turned the districts into virtual 'no-go' areas or, in the jargon of rebellion, a 'liberated zone'. It was within the Creggan and Bogside that NICRA planned to march and, to avoid the near certainty of violent confrontation, the security forces decided to halt the march if it attempted to leave the Bogside for its declared destination, the Guildhall, which was in the Protestant-dominated city centre. The likely exit point would be William Street, the site of previous hooligan and sniper activity.

The march began in the Creggan Estate and took a circuitous route through South Creggan, Brandywell, south and north Bogside and Lone Moor Road. At their peak, the marchers numbered some 3000, being orderly and well marshalled at least until the head of the column arrived in William Street. Here the militant element broke loose and ran ahead of the march to confront soldiers manning a roadblock at the bottom of the street. The main body of the procession was diverted into Rossville Street and marched on past the Rossville Flats to an assembly area at 'Free Derry Corner' where speeches were to be made. Meanwhile the hooligans at the roadblock were hurling missiles, including a CS smoke cannister stolen at some earlier date, and making life difficult for the troops. It was about 4 pm.

It was part of the Security Forces plan, which had foreseen the course of events including the confrontation in William Street, that an attempt should be made to arrest as many hooligans as possible.[86] Care was taken, however, not to launch this arrest operation until the marchers proper were well separated from the rioters. This moment was deemed to have arrived at ten past four and the 1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment moved in on the stone-throwers. The soldiers were aware that the IRA had frequently posted snipers to cover such hooligan activity, briefed to murder one or more of any group trying to make arrests, and that the William Street area was favoured in this respect. The paratroopers were, therefore, armed with rifles for self-defence. None carried a fully automatic weapon. The events of the next few minutes left 13 civilians dead and 17 wounded and drew down upon that day the title 'Bloody Sunday'.[87]

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86. These hooligans were not expected to include known IRA members. The latter organised, but did not become involved in, street disorders. (Personal, 1971-72.)

87. For an account of the incident, see Richard Clutterbuck Protest and the Urban Guerrilla (London, 1973), Chapter 10.

Within minutes of the last shot, various allegations were being made. The troops had 'burst into Rossville Street firing indiscriminately. They fired on Red Cross personnel and people who waved white handkerchiefs to indicate they were only helping people'.[88] A priest said: 'It was a massacre, I saw no one shooting at troops - if anybody had been I would have seen it. I only saw Army shooting'.[89] Another witness insisted that 'most of the people shot in Derry last Sunday following the British Army invasion of the Bogside were shot in the back'.[90] Seven Catholic priests issued a statement at a Londonderry press conference that accused the soldiers of 'shooting indiscriminately into a fleeing crowd, of gloating over casualties and of preventing medical and spiritual aid reaching some of the dying'.[91] Most of these allegations turned out to be untrue. They were,it seems, the emotional outbursts of shocked and confused people who tried to express in words what their instincts told them must have happened. Mr John Hume, Member of the Northern Ireland Parliament for Foyle, expressed it best when he said: 'Their action (the paratroops) has left this city numb with shock, horror, revulsion and bitterness'.[92] Miss Bernadette Devlin coined the phrase: 'This was our Sharpeville'.[93]

For all that these stories were inaccurate, they formed the first 'Bloody Sunday' myth, that the paratroops had simply run amok, with or without orders, and fired indiscriminately into the rear of a peaceful civil rights march. The writer was in Canada on 30 January 1973. The radio news reader reminded listeners that it was 'the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" when British troops fired into the rear of a peaceful civil rights march, killing 13'.[94] For

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88. Michael Canavan, quoted Irish Independent (Dublin, 31 January 1972).
89. Father Denis Bradley, quoted Irish News (Belfast, 31 January 1972).
90. Martin Brennan, quoted Irish Independent (Dublin, 2 February 1972).
91. Report, News Letter (Belfast, 1 February 1972).
92. Quoted Irish News (Belfast, 31 January 1972).
93. Ibid.
94. Heard by the writer in Kingston, Ontario on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio news 8 am, 30 January 1973.

most of the world audience the first reports were the only ones with impact and lasting impression. The subsequent investigations and revelations were too tedious for all but the keenly interested, and got brushed aside. "A lie can be halfway round the world ... ' [95]

Although the security forces had been ready for violence to break out at any stage during the day, and especially during the arrest operation, the last thing anyone expected was a large number of civilian casualties inflicted by the military. A senior officer, unaware of the extent of the tragedy, told a reporter in a Londonderry street minutes after the shooting that the troops 'fired three shots at three men ... '[96] At the army headquarters near Belfast the information staff was unable to issue any statement to explain the shocking event. All that anyone could do was to confirm the deaths and injuries and to promise a full enquiry. As critical reaction mounted the army in Ulster and in London emphasised three points: the paratroopers, spokesmen said, had come under fire from the Rossville Flats, the troops 'did not fire lead bullets until lead bullets were fired at them' (they had earlier fired rubber baton rounds), and all shooting by the military had been directed at targets ascertained as the source of hostile fire.[97] The Westminster Government appointed the Lord Chief Justice to head a one-man Tribunal to investigate the circumstances giving rise to the 13 deaths. The incident was on the front page of every newspaper and led every news broadcast. Not unnaturally, the general conclusion reached was that the soldiers had over-reacted and killed innocent people.

The Provisionals joined forces with the Officials in making capital out of the event. Within hours they called a joint press conference in the Creggan where they threatened vengeance.[98] Since both groups had for months been killing as many soldiers as they could, what they were presumably saying to the assembled journalists was 'now you must agree that future murders will be justified'. In the

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95. See p 134.

96. Quoted Irish Times (Dublin, 31 January 1972).

97. Colonel Dalzell-Payne speaking at the Ministry of Defence, quoted Times (London, 1 February 1972).

98. See Evening Standard (London, 31 January 1972).

Irish Republic the IRA forced a week-long boycott against the import of UK papers, lest any official account might lessen the effect on Irish opinion. After arousing the mob, the Provisionals on 2 February organised the burning down of the British Embassy building in Dublin. The Officials meanwhile planned their own vengeance, which did not take effect until three weeks later.

The army could say very little in its own defence once the announcement of Lord Widgery's Tribunal had been made, since the proper time and place to make statements would be before the Lord Chief Justice. It had, however, pointed out that all the dead were men of 'military age', which it argued would have been remarkable had they been victims of indiscriminate fire into a crowd containing men of all ages, women and children. Evidently worried by this argument, and no doubt concerned that, under oath, civilian witnesses would destroy the 'firing into the rear of a peaceful march' theory, Republicans changed their version of events.

The earliest version of the second 'Bloody Sunday' myth surfaced in the Republic on 6 February in the Sunday Independent. Mr Joe MacAnthony penned his name to the 'investigative' piece which announced that far from being an occasion of indiscipline and indiscriminate firing, the events of 30 January had been part of a criminal conspiracy. The tactic of shooting 'any male of military age within the vicinity of a shooting incident'[99], readers were told, had been successfully applied in Belfast and was used for the first time in Londonderry on the fateful day. The article was republished three weeks later as a special supplement[100] at a moment when evidence before the Widgery Tribunal was pointing to other conclusions. A later edition of the Irish Independent announced that the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

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99. Sunday Independent (Dublin, 6 February 1972).

100. Supplement to Irish Independent (Dublin, 1 March 1972).

had ordered 4,000 copies of the supplement for distribution to all Irish Embassies and missions and to news agencies, politicians, civil servants and Church leaders. MacAnthony's version was perhaps conceived in a fit of anger and frustration that could only be calmed by an exercise of inventive journalism. Later, he was to write fearlessly against IRA violence. It was because he was in no way connected with violent organisations that his piece carried conviction. This is the propaganda spin-off that insurgents hope for when respected opinion-formers interpret facts.[101]

Another version of the second myth appeared at about the same time as the special Irish Independent supplement, during the Tribunal's hearings. 'What Happened in Derry', by Eamonn McCann, was published in England as a Socialist Worker pamphlet by the International Socialists.[102] McCann claimed that the army's plan had been to shoot innocent civilians so that the IRA would be forced to defend the Bogside. The pamphlet explained that the plan miscarried because 'the IRA had not read the books and didn't understand that they were supposed to act in the manner anticipated'.[103]

For audiences predisposed to believe the worst of British action in Northern Ireland, such explanations could be accepted uncritically. For anyone prepared to give them careful thought, they were scarcely credible. These versions required their readers to believe that senior commanders, staff and regimental officers, and some 500 soldiers were all party to a conspiracy to murder 'men of military age', carried out in broad daylight in front of 3000 civilian witnesses and half the world's press. Efforts by Counsel for the relatives of the dec sased to find evidence to back such notions at the Widgery Tribunal failed and no evidence has been produced elsewhere. Nevertheless we have the distinguished author Leon Uris giving such myths respectability in his

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101. On 23 July 1972, two days after a Provisional bomb attack in Belfast, the Sunday Independent wrote in its editorial: 'We fostered the men who planned the murders of innocent men, women, boys and girls in Belfast on Friday. We fed these people with propaganda. We took advantage, when we could, of their exploits ... Now all of us must pay the price for this neglect ... '

102. Since renamed the 'Socialist Workers' Party'.

103. Eamonn McCann What Happened in Derry (London, undated), p 12.

best-selling book on Ireland.[104] From the imagination of a propagandist, through the pen of a novelist, we can expect these stories to find their place in 'history'. Provisional Sinn Féin's Manual of Publicity states 'The official papers of the movement are a vital long-lasting link with the public. The written word remains long after the speech has been made or the heated arguments concluded'.[105]

The facts uncovered by the Tribunal[106] convinced Lord Widgery that no military plan existed to kill or capture members of the IRA, and that the move of soldiers into the Bogside was for the reason given by military witnesses, to arrest hooligans who were disturbing the peace. The weight of evidence indicated that shooting began when a burst of automatic fire was opened on soldiers as they quit their armoured carriers,[107] and that thereafter shots were returned at a number of targets. There was strong suspicion that some of those killed had been firing weapons or handling bombs: it was also virtually certain that many of those killed or wounded were fired at in the mistaken belief that they threatened life and were in fact innocent. Widgery concluded: 'There was no general breakdown in discipline. For the most part the soldiers acted as they did because they thought their orders required it. No order and no training can ensure that a soldier will always act wisely, as well as bravely and with initiative. The individual soldier ought not to have to bear the burden of deciding whether to open fire in confusion such as prevailed on 30 January. In the conditions prevailing in Northern Ireland, however, this is often inescapable'.[108]

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104. Leon and Jill Uris, pp 220-221.

105. Provisional Sinn Fein Manual of Publicity (Meitheamh, 1974).

106. Great Britain, Parliament Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into the events, 30 January 1972, which led to loss of life in connection with the Procession in Londonderry that Day, HC 220 - The Widgery Tribunal (London, 1972).

107. According to the transcript of evidence, Messrs Seymour, Wilkinson and Campbell, all civilian witnesses, heard this burst of fire, as did many military witnesses, and the writer, who was in Chamberlain Street at the time. See also report by Mr Tony Martin in Irish Times (Dublin, 1 February 1972).

108. Widgery Tribunal Report, p 39.

The Tribunal's evidence and findings probably provide the best, and certainly offer the fullest, account of 'Bloody Sunday' available at present. But any hopes that so rational a document might provide a counter to emotional propaganda were soon dashed. In the manner of such enquiries, critics selected items from the Tribunal that supported their arguments while at the same time condemning Lord Widgery for 'covering up' in some unspecified way. Like the affair of La Patria[109] the truth behind the event may take some time to surface. Republican propaganda found it necessary to explain why it was that no IRA members came to the defence of the Bogside. The story was that gunmen had been withdrawn that day to the Creggan estate because 'the British Army might use this opportunity to invade and seize the estate'.[110] As Ellul might comment, the truth which pays off may have been in the fact of such a withdrawal, and the lies, which also pay off, may have been concealed in the declared intention. Fear of a military invasion might be considered a less credible explanation than fear that a known IRA member might be among those killed or wounded. This second possible fear could only have been present if IRA leaders anticipated shooting in the Bogside that afternoon, and this would have been the case only if they had planned to start it. There is at present no adequate evidence that this was the case. In the summer of 1972 an IRA suspect told his security force interrogator that on 'Bloody Sunday' he had fired two magazines from a M1 carbine from the Rossville Flats,[111] and on 27 January 1974 a letter from a 'former member of the IRA' appeared in an Australian newspaper saying that 'the Bloody Sunday massacre was the most devious bit of propaganda ever perpetrated by our group ... '[112] The suspect refused to expand on his statement when questioned further[113]

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109. See p 134.

110. McCann, p 12.

111. Personal, 1971-72.

112. Anonymous letter to Sunday Independent (Perth, 27 January 1974).

113. When first questioned, the suspect, newly arrested, spoke freely. Unfortunately the interrogator did not see the significance of these confessions and failed to collect details. When interviewed a second time, the suspect had been disciplined by Provisional leaders in the internment centre, and said nothing.

and attempts to contact the anonymous author have failed. Untested, neither fragment of evidence carries conviction, and it might be misleading at this stage to suggest a conspiracy in the cause of disinformation. As it was, the far-reaching propaganda and political repercussions of the event were heedless of the underlying cause of the deaths. The army was seen to be guilty.

The Soviets called 'Bloody Sunday' 'a crime unprecedented in its brutality' in an account that told Russian readers that the 13 civilians were 'gunned down by British "occupation" troops after they were issued a "don't spare the bullets" directive by the British Government'.[114] 'The main effect of Sunday's shootings', wrote an Australian leader-writer, 'is that they have ended whatever slim chance the British and Stormont Governments had of imposing a compromise solution on the Catholic minority'.[115] In America, 'An Irish-American Committee said yesterday that it would attempt to mobilise American and worldwide opinion against British involvement in Northern Ireland'.[116] 'The bloodbath in Derry', speculated a Dutch journalist, 'has removed the last remnants of respect that the Catholics of Northern Ireland - in fact all Irish Catholics - had for British soldiers'.[117] These international reactions were mirrored in parts of British domestic opinion. In particular, it seemed that the event bestowed apparent verity upon what Mr T E Utley describes as 'the fundamental view which lies at the very root of the Liberal tradition, that the lawful exercise of force by the State is pre-destined to fail and will always in the end prove to be..."counter-productive" '[118] which he sees as linked with 'an inordinate belief in the efficacy of force when applied by rebels

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114. Izvestia (Moscow, 1 February 1972).

115. Australian (Sydney, 1 February 1972).

116. Reported Irish Independent (Dublin, 2 February 1972).

117. De Volkswrant (Amsterdam, 2 February 1972).

118. T E Utley Lessons of Ulster (London, 1975), pp 12-13.

against the state'.[119] It was perhaps with such ideas in mind that Mr Harold Wilson, then Leader of the Westminster Opposition, visited Dublin.

Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien tried to convince Mr Wilson that it would be unwise for him to negotiate with the IRA at that time. 'It would encourage them in the view that they were winning and that they were the true heirs of 1921'.[120] Mr Wilson evidently has a knack of getting his own way, and he parleyed. McGuire wrote: 'Wilson seemed to be more concerned with creating a favourable image, behaving in a very hearty manner, slapping the three (Provisional leaders) on the back and using words like "bloody" and "Christ". Presumably, he thought the Provisionals swore in this way ... The real coup for us came a week or so later when Wilson revealed that he had met the Provisionals ... It was a considerable propaganda victory for us, that a leading politician like Wilson should have talked to us - however unproductive the talks themselves'.[121] Cruise O'Brien concluded: 'Mr Wilson, like many another British statesman before him,[122] was helping the argument of those in Ireland who held that power must come from the barrel of a gun'.[123] It was people of this persuasion who decided that vengeance for 'Bloody Sunday' should be carried out in England. After that event the Official IRA had told its supporters: 'Stay free, brothers and sisters. There'll be another day'.[124] On 22 February their activists exploded a bomb at an Aldershot officers' mess, killing six civilians, five of them women, and a Catholic padre.

This writer cannot say whether or not the security forces' first internment operation would have reduced Provisional violence to a manageable level, or how long this might have taken, if it had been allowed to run its course. As it was, internal leverage, in part generated by the left, reinforced by international leverage resulting

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119. Utley, p 13.

120. Cruise O'Brien, p 286.

121. McGuire, pp 96-97.

122. See p 100.

123. Cruise O'Brien, p 287.

124. Page from the Starry Plough reproduced on back of McCann, op cit.

from the disaster in Londonderry on 30 January 1972, may have been important factors in bringing about the change of Government policy which was implemented on 24 March. 'Direct rule' by Westminster closed down the Northern Ireland Parliament and effectively ended the first attempt to control violence by the use of internment, even though the measure itself was to remain in use for another 3½ years. Few observers doubted at the time that 'Bloody Sunday' had been a crucial influence on these decisions.

Discussion

Provisional IRA propaganda relied for its strength upon the organisation of Northern Catholics brought about by social conditions which insulated them from outside influence and made them receptive to messages from within, upon pre-propaganda in the form of Catholic education, cultural myths and social conditioning, upon the sense of grievance against real hardships, discrimination and fear caused by Protestant domination, and upon the native Irish aptitude for propaganda. When facts were provided by security forces in their attempts to control insurgency, the interpretation of these facts assisted the mobilisation of the Catholic mass in support of insurgency. Outside Ulster, Catholic Irish Communities were susceptible to propaganda and through the political left audiences who might otherwise have remained indifferent to the struggle were moved to act on the Provisionals' behalf. Throughout the period under study, and until the summer of 1972 when the Provisionals gave so much away, these groups tended to accept the Provisionals as the true heirs of 1916 and 1920 and therefore believed their propaganda. 'Bloody Sunday' provided 'facts' giving apparent substance to earlier allegations, and raised the level of international sympathy.

Against the 'enemy' target audience, Britain, the main thrust of Provisional propaganda was coercion, using the cost in lives and in money as the means that might bring about the Asset-to-Liability-Shift. In many ways the campaign was effective. Few Britons, it would seem, really regarded Ulster as a vital issue, and many expressed the view that Britain ought to quit Northern Ireland and leave the Irish to sort out their own affairs. These sentiments were reinforced by the persuasive component of the Provisional campaign, which used guilt-transfer

to make many English feel that whatever their government and security forces did in Ireland was wrong. Dr J Bowyer Bell has acknowledged that all too often guerrilla-revolutionaries are driven by an urge to act that suppresses recognition of the reality that the action proposed cannot achieve any useful result. Without a credible strategy the rebels are limited to tactics. 'Guerrilla-revolutionaries often insist these are a strategy.'[125] Some compulsion of this sort may explain why the Provisionals embarked upon a campaign that ignored the practical difficulties for Britain in abandoning part of the United Kingdom to likely civil war, and the one million Protestants themselves who might well fight in such a war. The result was a campaign strong on violence and strong on propaganda, but weak in political reality.

Against the Protestant community Provisional propaganda made little impression, that group being as impenetrable to outside influence as the Catholics. The Official IRA have hoped to break through this barrier by appeals to working-class solidarity across sectarian lines. So far Irishmen have tended to view the hammer and sickle with suspicion, and to ask before committing themselves whether its backdrop is green or orange.

Techniques visible in the Provisionals' propaganda campaign included Transfer of Testimonial through which the organisation claimed legitimacy as the heirs to 1916 and 1920, so important to the morale of members, and Glittering Generalities in their expressed concern over civil rights, employment and community interests. Simplification and Card Stacking were much in evidence, influencing many journalists, as was Rationalisation, to explain what might otherwise be seen as murder. Slogans, Vagueness, Name-Calling, and Symbolism had their uses and Appeal underwrote unity. The main themes of revolutionary propaganda used by the Provisionals can be grouped under three headings, mobilisation, conflict and survival. Mobilisation themes were righteousness of the cause, using the interim aims of 'equal rights', 'smash Stormont' and 'British troops out' to conceal the main aim of reunification, hatred of Britain and Protestants, the inevitability of rebel victory, the duty of all Catholics to commit themselves to the

125. J Bowyer Bell (iii) The Myth of the Guerrilla (New York, 1971) p 255.

cause, and moral certainty, to convince activists that killing was no murder. Nine themes of conflict can be identified: the glorification of heroes; the praising of violence; the idea expressed by Father Campbell, that revolutionary violence was justified as an unavoidable reaction to state violence; security force incompetence linked to the 'long war' theme that argues that because the government cannot win quickly, it cannot win at all; government bad faith in its dealings with the Catholic population; the transfer of guilt to the enemy camp by torture allegations and similar messages; the legitimacy of the revolt; the credibility of Provisional threats and deeds; and, towards Britain, the cost and futility of resistance. In America and other 'neutral' target areas, the Provisionals concentrated their propaganda on the issue of legitimacy.

Terror backed up the themes of mobilisation and conflict, but another use was to add strength to the final group of themes, those of survival. We saw in earlier studies how, for instance, the Assassins used terror as a means of protecting their propagandists and of gaining time for new ideas to gain acceptance, and how the Irgun Zwai Leumi took advantage of the liberal beliefs of their opponents and used the 'invisible lifebelt' of world opinion to deter any drastic counter-measures. The Provisionals refined this survival propaganda by the exposure to world indignation of every act of security forces that threatened to curb their violent activities, whether or not such acts were legally or morally objectionable. The theme of 'counter-productivity' ran hard on the heels of guilt. Activists were promised security by the pretence at belligerent status, and authority was urged to treat convicted terrorists as 'political prisoners'. Commanders, units and methods that served the government effectively were each in turn subjected to propaganda attacks.

If the Provisional insurgency was strong on violence and propaganda and weak on politics, it might be said that the government response had strength in only one component of the triad - police and military counter-measures. The political reply was divided between Westminster and Stormont and therefore lacked clarity and conviction, and the attempts to counter hostile propaganda suffered from lack of prior awareness, planning, structure and skill, as well as from the

obvious limitations imposed by the three-sided nature of the conflict. Some progress was made, particularly in the adjustment of security force policies and methods to accommodate the 'public opinion factor', and in the months following the period covered by this chapter the pendulum of domestic and world opinion swung against the Provisionals.

CHAPTER VII

FREEDOM IS OUR AIM, AND ISLAM IS THE WAY

COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA IN DHOFAR

Introduction

> Arabs rule but do not administer. Their government is intensely individualistic, and is successful or unsuccessful according to the degree of fear and respect which the ruler commands, and his skill in dealing with individual men. Founded on an individual life, their government is impermanent and liable to end in chaos at any moment. To Arab tribesmen this system is comprehensible and acceptable, and its success or failure should not be measured in terms of efficiency and justice as judged by western standards. To these tribesmen security can be bought too dearly by loss of individual freedom. 1

Thus wrote Mr Wilfred Thesiger of his Dhofari hosts when, in 1945, he was preparing to set out from Salalah on the first of his journeys across the Rub at Khali or Empty Quarter. In the immediate post-war years the Arab world lived under a Pax Britannica. Ties of one sort or another linked most states to Britain, whose protection provided relative tranquillity. As Britain surrendered her imperial role, Arab nations that had preserved ancient ways of life found it increasingly difficult to resist the wind of change. Nationalism stimulated the urge to catch up with western materialism while, for many, oil revenues provided the means. Modernisation could be achieved only with the help of developed nations. Some turned to the Soviet bloc. Those who regarded communism as incompatible with Islamic ideals or as a threat to independence looked instead towards Europe or America. Here and there, change was resisted.

Oman is a country situated on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula. It incorporates the separated province of Masandam which controls the narrow entrance to the Persian Gulf. For the most part, Oman is composed of barren mountains and desert, although near to the sea there are fertile valleys and plains. The population - nearly half a million - is concentrated mainly in the north-east, where stands the capital, Muscat. Only some 50,000 live in the south-western

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1. Wilfred Thesiger, Arabian Sands, (London, 1959), pp 46-47.

province of Dhofar, isolated from the remainder by 750 kilometres of inhospitable desert. Oman is ruled by a Sultan, and until 1970 his power was exerted very much in the manner described by Thesiger.

Sultan Said bin Taimur had rejected the material and cultural features of western society, preferring strict isolation and adherence to Islamic Law. By his decree foreign goods, photography, dancing, music smoking and the wearing of western clothing or sunglasses were forbidden. Neither in education nor in medicine was progress allowed. He was more successful than King Canute in ordering the tide, but his success was costly and fragile. The material well-being of his people was retarded to such an extent that even the independence valued by the bedu scarcely compensated. Furthermore the compulsory preservation of a way of life that was no longer altogether natural eroded the cherished independence. Unrest at home was inevitable, and this was encouraged by expatriate Omanis in Kuwait and Iraq, including sons of wealthy Dhofari merchants who had been educated in the Gulf states. Initially the cause of disaffection was apolitical and personal: there was no complaint against the system, only against the way Sultan Said worked it. However, the days were gone when a local grievance was left to find its own remedy. First China and later Russia patronised the groups seeking progress. As communists took over the leadership, the movement's purpose was distorted from domestic reform to Marxist revolution.

This Chapter examines the role of propaganda in the Dhofar rebellion, and in the Omani Government's counter measures.

The Revolutionary Threat

The communist-led insurgents decided to concentrate their main attack upon Dhofar, an isolated and disaffected objective. By no means were ambitions restricted to this small province, as the movement's new title adopted in 1968 indicated. They called themselves the 'Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf'.[2] One year earlier Britain had withdrawn from the Aden Protectorate, thus in

2. Decision of the Second Congress of the Dhofar Liberation Front held at Hamrin, Dhofar, in September 1968. See Documents of the National Struggle in Oman and the Arabian Gulf (London, 1974), pp 9-11. (Documents)

practice handing over the whole south-western corner of Arabia to a Marxist government subservient to Russia. Aden's port and airfield were quickly taken into use by Soviet naval and air forces. In the opinion of some Western observers, the conquest of Dhofar was planned by communist leaders as the next step in a counter-clockwise advance around the Arabian Peninsula: from the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), as the old Protectorate was now called, across the border into Dhofar, then on to Oman proper, including control of the entrance to the Persian Gulf, the Gulf states, Kuwait. Saudi Arabia would then be virtually surrounded. Iran would be isolated. The Soviet Bloc, which is changing from being self-sufficient in oil to being a major importer, would in this scenario become master of the largest world source[3] and could bring Western Europe to its knees.

Although Dhofar was the primary objective of revolutionary forces there was in 1970 another group, calling itself the 'National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf' (NDFLOAG) active in north-eastern Oman. This movement's operations were invariably thwarted by the Sultan's security forces and in 1971 what was left of NDFLOAG was absorbed by the Popular Front. The battle for Oman was to be fought in Dhofar, where the objective conditions of successful revolution were thought to exist.

By 1970, the revolutionaries' battle was nearly won. Benefiting from Chinese training and weapons, the Popular Front in 1968 and 1969 had expanded its military action from isolated attacks against personnel and equipment of an American oil company to the creation of 'liberated areas' within Dhofar.[4] Confident in the justice of their cause and in the certainty of eventual victory, guerrilla soldiers controlled nearly all the Jebel, the mountain escarpment which dominates the coastline and the narrow plain where the main town of Salalah is situated. Movement on the road north from Salalah to Thamrait was all but denied to government forces, virtually cutting land communications between Dhofar and the rest of Oman. In

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3. See R Rockingham Gill, 'Soviet Oil in the 1980s' in Journal of The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies Vol 121, No 2, (London, June 1976), pp 73-77.

4. For a full account of the earlier phases see D L Price, Oman: Insurgence and Development, (London, 1975).

contrast, the rebels occupied the town of Rakhyut, 30 kilometres east along the coast from the PDRY border, securing a line of communication from their bases in that country to the area of operations. This area was creeping towards Salalah itself. By June 1970 experienced observers feared that the rot was too far gone for restoration. Dhofar appeared doomed.

The battlefield was almost ideally suited to the needs of the rebels, a feature not uncommon in revolutionary warfare, since rebels can usually choose where to operate. In the west, along the PDRY border, the Jebel rises almost straight out of the sea and stretches inland some 100 kilometres. Further east the Jebel narrows to between 20 and 40 km, allowing more room in the south for a fertile coastal plain, and in the north for the stone desert that separates the mountains from the sand of the Empty Quarter. Neither the deserts nor the plains saw much fighting: the battlefield was the Jebel and its rolling foothills. This relatively small mountain area has a feature that makes it unique along the 2,100 kilometres of the South Arabian coast - regular rainfall. Some peculiarity of geography draws the monsoon clouds and the coastal, southern slopes are covered with mist and rain throughout the summer. In consequence during the months following the rain the foothills and ravines take on the appearance of south-east Asia rather than Arabia, being lush green under tall grass, jungle trees, jasmine, giant convolvulus, fig trees and tamarinds.[5] During the dry season the grass withers and the jungle shrinks but neither disappears completely. The deep ravines that dissect the Jebel offer cover to small groups of men and animals in all seasons; when they are green they provide hiding places for an army. Apart from the main Thamrait road, motorable tracks existed nowhere on the Jebel in 1970. There was water enough for small parties of men but for larger military-size units this was insufficient, placing reliance upon wells, which in 1970 were few and far between. Thus for water and supplies of all kinds the government forces came to depend

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5. Further inland, on the arid divide between Jebel and desert, there are frankincense trees, givers of the once priceless gum. In ancient times Egypt, Assyria and the Seleucids fought for control of the frankincense trade, and the Roman Emperor Augustus despatched an army to conquer the source of this delight.

on supply by air. The monsoon severely restricted flying. While the rains lasted there was water in abundance but a detachment relying upon supply of other commodities by air might have to be withdrawn.

The Popular Front was based in the PDRY where it set up its political, military and propaganda centres, including the 'Lenin School'[6] at al-Gheidha and a military training camp near the Omani border, at Hauf. Its political strength came from its backers, first China and then Russia, through whom it was able to draw support from one or other of the communist blocs and, regardless of whether Peking or Moscow held the tiller, from the New Left and those international front organisations that tend to support any movement hostile to Western interests. This powerful muster also handled the international propaganda campaign on behalf of the Popular Front. Within the Arab world, Syria, Iraq and Libya were foremost in the provision of vocal support. Inside Oman the rebels' political credibility rested entirely upon the old Sultan's mistakes. There was no broadly-based communist or other revolutionary party active anywhere in Oman, only small élites. The leaders in the Popular Front were by this time communists, all influential dissenters having been eliminated. Many of these commanders had been to Peking or Moscow for deep indoctrination.

In military terms the Popular Front's 'People's Liberation Army' numbered at any one time about seven or eight hundred armed guerrillas, backed up, in Dhofar, by tribesmen (the 'People's Militia') who supplied food and other necessities, and in the PDRY, by that country's armed forces and communist bloc advisers.[7] Being on home territory, these guerrillas could out-manoeuvre government troops. If hard pressed, they could hide their weapons and merge with the local population. For rest and retraining, they enjoyed the sanctuary of PDRY. Their training was good and the tough Jebelis made brave and effective fighters. Their personal weapon was the ubiquitous AK47 Kalashnikov assault rifle, supplied first by the Chinese and later by the Russians.

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6. The school accepted for political indoctrination about 700 young people from Dhofar. The name has since changed to 'People's School'.

7. See Penelope Tremayne (i) 'End of a Ten Years' War', in Journal of The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, Vol 122, No 1, (London, March, 1977), pp 44-48.

Encounter tactics stressed the importance of gaining a psychological advantage over government troops at the outset. To this end the guerrillas were trained to fire complete 30-round magazines towards their opponents, each in one long burst, thus forcing SAF to ground and leaving the insurgents free to manoeuvre.[8] Their local knowledge and popular support enabled them to operate in small groups, living off the land and its water, and thus remain potent throughout the twelve months of each year. Their reliance upon communications with the PDRY base increased later, when they received heavier and more sophisticated weapons and fashioned their strategy around them.

For their internal propaganda campaign, the rebels also enjoyed foreign help. Aden radio was at their disposal, pouring a torrent of words across South Arabia and listened to by virtually every Dhofari, as no Omani government broadcast service reached them. On the Jebel, face-to-face propaganda and indoctrination was undertaken by the new cadre of foreign-trained bureaucrats, the political commissars. Besides harbouring the grievances arising from the old Sultan's polities, the population of Dhofar was inevitably influenced by the military prowess of the rebels and the apparent inability of government forces to retrieve a deteriorating situation. The 'climate of collapse' threatened to undermine the will to resist. The 'inevitability of Marxist victory' was a theme stressed on Aden Radio.

It was against this sombre background that Oman took the first and most important step towards remedying its own grievances. On 23 July 1970 Qaboos bin Said, Sultan Said's only son, deposed his father and became Sultan in his place.

The Counter-Revolution

The new ruler was half-Dhofari and was naturally concerned for the future of this province. He had been privately educated in Salalah before attending Britain's Royal Military Academy. Commissioned into the British Army, Qaboos served for some time in Germany before returning to college to study government administration. His first

8. The writer visited Dhofar to research this chapter in January 1977. He toured the Jebel and was briefed by Government, Military, Intelligence and Information executives. ('Briefing, January 1977')

priority as Ruler was to free his country from the near-fatal side-effects of ultra conservatism. Sultan Said had been neither tyrant nor rascal. He had resisted change because he sincerely believed that western influence would damage Omani spiritual values, an assessment in which he may yet be proved to have been correct. The dangerous complication arose from his failure to win his subjects' support for his piety and, through rigid enforcement, his alienating the masses. Despite its later alien overtones, the Dhofar rebellion began with wide popular support.

Qaboos instituted what in practice amounted to a counter-revolution. This was to function on political, economic, military and propaganda fronts to disarm the enemy and recover Dhofar for civil development within a progressive Oman.[9] Politics and economics led the way. Oman's new oil wealth was to be exploited to provide advantages most needed by the people - education, medical services, communications, housing, and, in the barren areas, water. Irksome restrictions were lifted and new links were forged between the ruler and his subjects. Qaboos saw the Dhofari rank and file rebels as fellow-countrymen who had been misled, rather than as enemies, a perception that was to be crucial to the government's psychological planning. Throughout the first year of the new Sultan's rule his armed forces were building up their strength for the struggle to regain control of the Jebel. This time was not wasted. It was used to lay down a propaganda barrage as effective in its way as artillery fire.

Notice boards were set up in government controlled areas to display counter-revolutionary propaganda and leaflets were dropped by aircraft onto rebel-held areas. The messages were threefold: that the new Ruler would set to right the grievances arising from his father's policies; that communism posed a threat both to Islamic faith and Omani independence; and, most important, that the rebels were offered amnesty. This encouraged them to return to their proper allegiance, without fear of retribution, and to benefit financially by bringing their arms with them. These messages had an immediate impact on many rebels, particularly those in the eastern Jebel. Arguments broke out

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9. See Penelope Tremayne (ii) 'Oman: The Defeat of a Communist Guerrilla Force', in Brassey's Defence Yearbook, (London, 1976), pp 195-208.

between the Marxist leaders and the nationalist rank and file; authority was defied and men began to slip away during the night to take advantage of the amnesty offer. The Popular Front faced a difficult dilemma. As Marxists they had taken control of the movement by 'entryism'. They possessed no ideological hold over their members that might enable them to recover their allegiance by appeals to loyalty. This left the leaders with two options: to watch their 'Liberation Army' disintegrate before their eyes, or to discipline it by rule of terror. Given the nature of their political creed, there was never any doubt as to which course they would adopt.[10]

In a short, brutal operation, the communists fell upon the doubters in their ranks and murdered them. Discipline was re-established, but at a price. Disgusted by this terrorism, 201 rebels defied their leaders and surrendered to the government. Popular Front propaganda attempted to present this event as a 'reactionary conspiracy' nipped in the bud by the rebel leaders, and they issued a six-page statement along these lines.[11] The defections were not mentioned.

Before 1970 was out the Government provided the Dhofari listening public with an alternative to Aden Radio. A tiny 1 kilowatt transmitter began to broadcast from Salalah. The authorities used this to exploit the news value of the defections by putting surrendered rebels 'on the air'. These men confirmed the sincerity of the amnesty terms, recommended their erstwhile comrades to follow their example, and denounced those rebels responsible for murdering colleagues. As time went by such broadcasts exposed the complete communist framework that dominated the rebel command structure. During the period 1970-74 the Government's 'surrender policy' brought more than a thousand rebels down off the Jebel to seek amnesty. These defections were particularly valuable as a means of transferring the 'climate of collapse' from Salalah into the enemy camp.[12]

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10. Briefing, January 1977.

11. Documents pp 47-52, 'On the Reactionary 12 September Conspiracy: the Attempted Counter-Revolution in Eastern Dhofar'.

12. Price, p 11.

In the Autumn of 1971 the military began their offensive to regain control of the Jebel, beginning in eastern Dhofar. The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) consisted throughout the campaign of land forces organised as the Dhofar Brigade and an equivalent force in Northern Oman, the Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF), and a small Navy. Command was exercised from SAF headquarters in Muscat by a seconded British officer. The Dhofar Brigade was also commanded by a Briton and consisted of between three and five infantry battalions, an armoured car squadron, a regiment of artillery, a squadron of engineers plus other logistic units, a total of 1974 of about 8,500 men.[13] SOAF support was always readily available in the form of ground attack, reconnaissance, and communication or transportation in fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. Salalah airfield was the centre for much of this flying. Besides contributing experienced commanders, Britain gave military assistance in the form of training teams staffed by the Special Air Service Regiment, an engineer squadron and a field surgical team, together with some junior and middle-rank officers and pilots. Initially the military advantage still lay with the rebels, particularly as the government troops were forced to abandon their gains during the monsoon. Although these withdrawals were due to difficulties of supply it was easy for the enemy to claim victories whenever a SAF post was temporarily withdrawn. Under the banner headline 'People's Army Crushes British Campaign', the Front's UK propaganda outlet Gulf Bulletin announced: 'The British and the Sultan's forces were able to make initial advances into the eastern region, but the PLA, fighting a people's war, let them advance and then encircled the bases they had set up. Qaboos himself came to visit the front lines but had to retreat with his men'.[14] This statement contained a continuing theme of Popular Front propaganda which presented the small British component of SAF as being full-scale British military intervention in the war. SOAF planes were constantly referred to as 'RAF'. This theme was doubtless important to the Front as a means of likening the Dhofar war to Vietnam, with the British cast in the same role as the

13. Military Press Brief, Dhofar (Dhofar, November 1976), p 10.
14. The Gulf Bulletin, Issue No 3 (London, February 1972).

Americans. Such 'colonial' or 'imperialist' connections were used repeatedly in attempts to discredit British assistance to the Sultan.

As the amnesty policy forced the rebels to use repressive measures within their own ranks, the leaders of the Popular Front appeared to lose their capacity for subtle and purposeful planning. In military parlance, they were rattled. Certainly their actions during the second half of 1972 implied poor judgement both in the military and the political fields. On 19 July the People's Liberation Army mustered more than one hundred rebel soldiers for an attack on the town of Marbat, at the eastern end of the Dhofar coastal plain. No doubt they were desperate for a spectacular victory to restore prestige and morale. The outcome was a disaster. The small garrison[15] made the most of the advantages enjoyed by the defence, and their superior firepower, and shattered the attack. Marbat held firm and the rebels suffered over seventy casualties.

Political mistakes followed in the Autumn, after a ten day visit by a Vietcong delegation to the 'Liberated Zone'. The four-page Joint Statement issued afterwards began with these words:

> At the invitation of the Executive Committee of PFLOAG, an NLF (National Liberation Front, or Vietcong) delegation led by Comrade Vo Dang Gieng of the Central Committee of the NLF paid a friendly visit to the liberated areas of Dhofar province from 16 to 26 September 1972. The delegation was warmly welcomed by the masses, the People's Liberation Army and the PFLOAG leadership in the liberated area. 16

The statement went on to describe how the discussions took place 'in a friendly atmosphere filled with revolutionary solidarity'.[17] Omitted from the document was any mention of the political advice offered by the Vietcong that, to their shame and grave disadvantage, the Arab Marxists followed blindly. This was the need to impose communist orthodoxy upon every living soul within the 'liberated areas'

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15. Marbat was defended by the Wali of Dhofar's askars, the Firqat, and British Army training advisors.

16. Documents p 60, 'Joint Statement of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf', paragraph 1.

17. Ibid.

without delay, exception, or mercy. Terrorism of the civilian population was the cornerstone of Vietcong tactics. How else could communism triumph? For the Popular Front to tolerate independence of thought or spirit amongst the Jebali tribesmen was to build upon sand.

The application of these principles began immediately. Jebalis who did not back the revolution, or who refused to renounce Mohammed in favour of Marx, were rounded up for execution. Obedient party members dragged their victims, including old men and youngsters, before firing squads, or forced them to walk to their deaths off cliffs.[18] In the same way that Che Guevara's efforts to export Cuban-style revolution to Bolivia failed, so the attempt by the Popular Front to impose an Asiatic revolutionary formula upon Arabs turned out to be a terrible disaster. The tribesmen were horrified by what the Marxists were doing. Far from strengthening the revolutionary base, the Vietcong tactics left the rebels friendless and exposed. They could still get what they wanted at the point of a gun. They could no longer rely on local people not to co-operate with government forces, a disadvantage that threatened their ability to survive on the Jebel.

The Firqats

Phase 1 of the Sultan's psychological offensive, begun in 1970, employed the offer of amnesty to reduce rebel numbers and undermine morale. Phase 2, which started in the following year, drew compound interest on the results of the first operation. Surrendered rebels were offered the opportunity to enlist in newly formed Firqats (literally, a group of men under arms), which would return to the Jebel as counter-guerrillas. Thus the Popular Front's loss would become the Sultan's gain, and a vitally important gain it was to turn out to be. Once established on the Jebel, the Firqats provided the organisational base necessary for Phase 3 of the psychological attack. This we will come to later.

Firqats were organised by tribal groupings and operated for the most part in their own tribal areas. Although initially recruited

18. Price, p 11. (Although one surrendered political commissar claimed knowledge of 300 executions, this is thought to be an exaggeration. 100 is a more likely figure.)

entirely from surrendered rebels, previous service with the enemy was not made a condition of entry. By the end of the campaign the Firqat strength was nearly 3000, of whom only one-third were ex-rebels. The others were tribesmen who had resisted the Popular Front's recruiting efforts. Firqats operated under overall SAF direction, sometimes acting as raiding parties or as scouts for SAF units, as well as providing a security infrastructure throughout the parts of the Jebel that had been cleared of enemy. On the mountain they were 'at home' in every sense of the phrase. To see a Firqa, accompanied by his wife and children, one of them carrying his rifle, ferried by helicopter from Salalah onto a remote Jebel outpost, was to witness an extraordinary alliance of things ancient and modern.[19] The Firqa experiment was not without its risks, but these had been carefully weighed by the authorities. The Popular Front's decision, following the Vietcong visit, to adopt terrorism as a weapon against hesitant Jebelis played into Government hands, because it made the Firqas all the more welcome to these unfortunate people.

Soviet Intervention

In the 1976 Strategic Survey the International Institute for Strategic Studies wrote:

> It was possible to state the importance of military strength to the Soviet Union in even starker terms: economically uncompetitive, culturally repressive and ideologically increasingly barren, her primary claim to global power and influence is military might. 20

This view of Russia as a world power was mirrored in the small province of Dhofar as the war approached its climax between 1973 and 1975. Russia had replaced China[21] as the main backer in 1972 and immediately set about creating conditions for military victory. Dhofari rebels were trained on modern weapons in the Soviet Union,

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19. The writer's observation, January 1977.

20. IISS Strategic Survey 1976, (London, 1977), p 3.

21. It is widely believed that Iranian diplomacy persuaded China to pull out of Oman.

in Iraq and in Libya, and in the Palestine Liberation Front's bases. Smaller numbers went to Cuba. Arms, ammunition and equipment poured into Aden. In the PDRY Russians, East Germans, Cubans and of course Yemenis provided training assistance. Where propaganda, terror and political action had failed, brute force was now intended to triumph.

This rapid build-up of strength enabled the Popular Front to resist the early efforts of SAF to eject it from the Jebel, and to recover from some of the worst consequences of its own mistakes. It was not until additional fighting units became available that the Thamrait road could be opened and the 'siege' of Salalah lifted. These fresh troops were Iranian, sent by the Shah to assist Qaboos restore his authority throughout Dhofar. Thrusting north from Salalah and south from Thamrait, the Iranian battle group opened the road and held positions astride it. It was never again to be closed by rebel action. Meanwhile SAF was applying a strategy of slow domination of the Jebel through holding a series of posts which were in time linked by barbed wire and minefields. These 'lines' set limits on rebel mobility and hampered their supply. By improved helicopter operation and extensive road construction, SAF and Iranian troops were able to remain on their positions 12 months a year. The earliest 'line' secured the dominating heights inland from Salalah; the next ran north from Mugsayl, 35 kilometres west of Salalah; the third, set up by the Iranians in 1974, moved the 'front' another 30 km to the west and, beginning on the coast at the one-time rebel headquarters of Rakhyut, extended northwards across the Jebel. In addition, a SAF post had in 1972 been established close to the PDRY border at Sarfait. For three and a half years this post was bottled up by the enemy without seriously interrupting the Front's supply lines. Regular PDRY artillery units bombarded the Sarfait positions, making manoeuvre difficult, while total dependence on helicopter supply for all items, including water, precisely defined the number of soldiers that could be maintained on post. Twice this small SAF detachment attempted to strike south and sever the rebel supply route. It was beaten back on both occasions.[22] Meanwhile Soviet weapons and ammunition continued

22. Brigadier J B Akehurst CBE, Commander Dhofar Brigade at the time, letter to the Writer, 11 July 1977, quoted by kind permission.

to reinforce the rebels on the western Jebel, and the outcome of the struggle continued uncertain.

Shortly before the first line of posts deprived the rebels of easy access to the Salalah coastal plain the guerrillas manhandled a 122 mm Katyushka rocket launcher with a number of rockets to within range of Salalah airfield. Although the projectiles found their target, they did little damage. Nevertheless this bold exploit served to underline the threat posed by Russia's arms supply. The Soviet aims, it would seem, were first to save the Popular Front from defeat and keep control of some at least of the Jebel, important as evidence of the supposed revolutionary character of the war, which might otherwise be seen as a PDRY invasion; second, to prolong the war and multiply its costs to Oman and her allies in terms of lives and money; third, to isolate Oman politically and bring about the defection of allies and backers, so that the strengthened rebel force could no longer be resisted. All this would amount to a repeat performance of the drama then approaching its climax in Vietnam, but on a much smaller scale. To defeat this threat the Sultan had to maintain the momentum of his counter-revolution on the military, political and propaganda fronts. His aims were to drive the rebels out of Omani territory, swiftly and without excessive loss to his own or allied troops, to integrate the Jebel into the nation's bloodstream so that this region would no longer harbour grievances or provide sanctuary to rebels, and to retain international confidence and goodwill and the help of allies. Clashes of wills were therefore likely between SAF and the People's Liberation Army over territory, between local government and the Popular Front over the hearts and minds of the Jebalis, and between the Omani Government and Moscow over world opinion. These will now be examined in reverse order.

International Propaganda

Although the bulk of the fighting was carried out on the Omani side by the Sultan's Armed Forces, the assistance provided by Britain and Iran, and later by Jordan,[23] was nevertheless vital to the overall

23. Jordan provided an engineer squadron for three years and a special forces battalion for six months, and some Jordanian pilots flew SOAF Hunters. (Briefing, 1977)

strategy. Without British expertise and Iranian strength, the reinforced rebel army, backed by Russia, Cuba, the PDRY and others might have posed a dangerous threat. The power that grows out of a gun barrel can only be held in check by similar power. It was therefore only natural that Russia should order her powerful propaganda service into action with the aim of depriving Oman of British and Iranian assistance.

The Iranian connection was attacked in two ways. Oman was accused of betraying the Arab cause by permitting Persian soldiers to operate against Arabs on the Arabian Peninsula, and Iran was denounced for 'aggression'. In September and October 1974 Al Hayat (Lebanon), Al-Akhbar (Lebanon), Ar-Rai al Amm (Kuwait) and Falastin-ath-Thawra (Syria) sang a chorus of castigation.[24] Moscow radio's Persian service appeared anxious to share an open secret with its listeners: 'We all know that if US and British imperialists and their allies did not support the puppet reactionary regime of Qaboos, this puppet regime could not remain in power for long. Without this support, says the Sunday Times, the war in Oman would have ended in a matter of days'.[25] Later this service talked of 'the moribund royalist regime of Sultan Qaboos - a regime which enjoys tremendous military aid, and for which an army of foreign mercenaries, including Iranian troops and officers, are being mobilized ... It is no coincidence, therefore, that the mercenary troops are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their involvement in the dirty war against the Omani people, often described by the press as a "quasi Vietnam" '.[26] Baghdad radio broadcast in Arabic the text of a Popular Front statement that claimed 'that the military invasion of Omani territory is a flagrant challenge to the Arab people of Oman. It is also a threat to all the areas of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula as well as a challenge to the Arab nation's will'.[27] Moscow radio's Arabic service pushed the same line.[28]

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24. Price, p 9.

25. Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) SU/4927/A4/1 of 12 June 1975, Item (b).

26. SWB SU/5016/A4/3 of 25 September 1975.

27. Baghdad Radio in Arabic 1154 GMT 20 December 1975 'PFLO Statement Appeals for Support for Omani People'.

28. For an example, see SWB SU/4927/A4/1 of 12 June 1975, Item (c).

Britain's role was sniped at from a variety of directions. The Gulf Committee, 6 Endsleigh St, London WC1, founded in 1971, described itself as an independent group working in support of the liberation movements in the Arabian peninsula and in Iran. The Committee received propaganda material from PFLOAG, PO Box 5037, Maala, Aden, translated this into English, threw in its own contribution, and presented the mixture in the form of a periodical, The Gulf Bulletin. Small circulation publications can achieve an influence out of all proportion to their readership by being put into the hands of selected politicians, journalists and others capable of influencing opinion. The March 1975 edition displayed a simple message on its cover page that exposed the primary purpose of publication: 'British and Iranian Troops out of Oman'.[29] Organisations similar to the London Gulf Committee existed elsewhere: In France, Comite de Soutien a la Revolution en Oman; in Sweden, KROAV; in Denmark, Golf and Palaestina Komiteen; in West Germany, Liga Gegen den Imperialismus, Nah-Ost Komitee, and AK Nah-Ost-Golf (Berlin); in Belgium, Comite National Palestine; in the USA, Gulf Solidarity. It might be safe to assume that every opinion-former in the western democracies could be reached by one or other of these propaganda outlets.

The Soviets did not leave matters entirely in the hands of such organisations. Tass English language broadcasts, newspapers, and the whole intricate machinery of State propaganda were directed towards the same objective, to alarm the British public into believing that they were being pulled into a Vietnam type situation in Oman, and thus create an irresistible demand for the withdrawal of British personnel on loan to the Sultan. The inevitability of revolutionary success, the high cost in casualties of resistance, and the evil nature of the Omani government were constant themes, overlaid by praise for the heroic Popular Front. Quoting Pravda, Tass concluded one broadcast thus: 'The newspaper recalls that the PFLO's second Congress last year called for the unity of all patriotic national forces in the struggle for the country's liberation from foreign occupation, the dismantling of foreign bases, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the complete eradication of vestiges of colonialism and the

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29. The Gulf Bulletin Issue No 9, (London, March 1975).

implementation of progressive social and economic reforms'.[30] The shorter title stood for 'Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman', adopted in August 1974 in an effort to enlist support from Gulf politicians, some of whom had feared that the provision of aid to an organisation openly dedicated to their overthrow might not be in their own best interests.

When under the heading 'Exit from Oman War long overdue' the London Morning Star turned its attention to Oman in January 1975 it toed the party line to perfection. 'While 84 MPs protested last December at the continuance of the Omani commitment', the 'Special Correspondent' complained, 'the Labour government appears to be pursuing an identical policy to that pursued by the Conservatives before them'.[31] Nor did the paper fail in its duty to stress the hopelessness of resistance, even though its terminology may have been faulty: 'The People's Front for the Liberation of Oman has intensified its action in the western part of Dhofar ... where for over nine years that has been a guerrilla war against the sultan and his British-officered army'.[32] The 'protest' by MPs had produced a motion 'That this House, deeply disturbed at the continuing involvement of members of Her Majesty's armed forces in Oman (whether assigned to the British establishment or seconded to the service of the Sultan) in military operations designed to suppress the liberation movement in Dhofar province, thus adding to the heavy burden of military expenditure overseas, causing continuing suffering, destruction and death and conflicting with the pledge in Labour's Manifesto to oppose all forms of colonialism, deeply regrets the decision announced in the Defence Review not to terminate the British commitment, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government urgently to reconsider the matter'.[33] Thus a military problem had been tackled in an unconventional manner. Seeing their attempts at achieving military victory blocked by the strength of SAF and its Iranian allies, the Soviets turned to propaganda as a means of

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30. SWB SU/4927/A4/1 of 12 June 1975, Item (a).
31. Morning Star, (London, 21 January 1975).
32. Morning Star, op cit.
33. Quoted The Gulf Bulletin, Issue No 9, (London, March 1975).

weakening the Omani defence. By generating indirect political pressure for the withdrawal of outside help, Russia hoped to redress the balance of power on the Jebel. This occurred at a time when Russia and her clientage were pouring military aid to the rebels.

The Omanis could not match the size and sophistication of the Soviet propaganda offensive. Nevertheless the Dhofar Information Office, which was built up from a shoestring start in 1970 to an effective and well equipped agency by 1975, did its imaginative best to counter Russia's efforts. The Office pointed to SAF's military successes and to achievements in civil development. The prime target audience was the Arab League, many of whose members had either been sitting on the fence or actively supporting PDRY and the Popular Front. The information service encouraged visits by sympathetic journalists, Arab ambassadors and other prominent people. They also developed press outlets in the Middle East, Europe and America.[34]

Integration Propaganda

The winning of Jebali loyalty involved combined military, political, economic and propaganda activity,and it relied heavily upon the Firqas. Jebalis needed first of all to feel secure from rebel retribution. SAF's successes drove the guerrillas away, and the Firqas defended the liberated 'liberated zones' from counter-attacks. Firqats also contributed to security through the 'grapevine' that existed on the Jebel, which often transcended the political commitments of Jebalis fighting on either side. Jebalis also needed to feel that a distant government in Muscat really cared about them, and here the political and economic factors came to the fore.

The economic factor acted merely as a limitation on what could be achieved politically. Thus the decision to devote considerable funds to the Jebel was of importance. The money was then spent by local government agencies. The instruments for Civil Development were the Dhofar Development Committee, the Dhofar Development Department and the Civil Action Teams. The Development Department organised road building (a significant factor in the defeat of the rebels with its

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34. Briefing, January 1977.

military, economic and social effects), the drilling for water and the institution of a beef cattle industry, which may revolutionise the Jebalis' life. The Civil Action Teams were a stop-gap measure between military re-occupation and the start of development proper. They provided relief for refugees and set up government, or community, centres which consisted of a temporary school, clinic, mosque and a shop. They also co-ordinated the flying doctor service. Firqas acted as government agents in many of these enterprises, or provided liaison between the local people and the outside experts. In addition, SOAF aircraft carried everything from doctors to casualties to sacks of rice to goats. Army engineers constructed tracks, water troughs and schools. Army medical teams were also active and military vehicles delivered water to isolated hamlets.

Given security and the prospect of an improved standard of living, the Jebalis were receptive to Government propaganda. Such routine media as information notice boards, mobile film shows and radio broadcasts played their parts. The key medium, however, was the firqa. Brigadier John Akehurst, who commanded the Dhofar Brigade during the crucial part of the struggle, has put it in these words:

> When we began the policy of restoring the Firqa to their tribal areas with military security, water well, shop, school, clinic and so forth we also created a news centre. People for miles around brought their cattle and families into the news centres and were there not only pumped for information but were subjected to a good deal of indoctrination for the Sultan and against the enemy. The Firqa were related to them all (as they were to the enemy for that matter!) and communication was therefore easy and effective. I personally think the establishing of Firqa back in their tribal areas was a war-winner in that it alienated the enemy and freed regular troops for major operations, and a peace-winner in that it won hearts and minds and established a form of management or government on the Jebel for later. 35

Thus from its first phase, amnesty, through the second, the formation of Firqats, the Sultan's psychological campaign progressed naturally to its third and final phase, the re-education and integration of the Jebalis.

In Salalah the Dhofar Information Office continued to address friends in the province and enemies in the PDRY. In 1973 a ten kilowatt radio transmitter was installed, giving way in 1975 to one of

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35. Akehurst, op cit.

150 kw. Finally colour television was provided, a medium of immense educational and political power. The Aden propagandists, perhaps lulled into complacency by being so long unchallenged, found themselves pressed onto the defensive. When in 1973 the People's Liberation Army used its new Soviet rockets against Salalah airfield it was not enough for Aden radio to state the facts. The commentator had to go on to claim several aircraft destroyed on the ground, massive casualties, fires, and so on. The airfield was within sight of Salalah town. Many Dhofaris worked there. There was no way the authorities could conceal damage, had it occurred. By trespassing into the world of make-believe, Popular Front propagandists not only destroyed their credibility but diminished the effectiveness of a brave and menacing exploit.

Omani themes remained largely unchanged. The military success of SAF and the Iranians, the benefits flowing from government policy, particularly the work of civil action, and the threat posed to Islamic values by Marxist subversion, continued as before. As the possibility of rebel victory receded, the emphasis shifted to national unity and future development. 'Freedom is our aim, and Islam is the way', which 'jingles' well in Arabic, became both a familiar radio catch phrase and a genuine national aspiration. To the outward embarrassment of the Dhofari Information Staff who had coined the words, many Dhofaris believed them to be of ancient Omani origin. We can perhaps forgive the authors if behind their embarrassment they enjoyed a moment of quiet rejoicing.[36]

Military Finale

Soviet propaganda did not deprive the Sultan of his allies, and on the Jebel, Omani propaganda succeeded in winning the allegiance of the once disaffected population. The final clash of wills was drawing close, and this time the outcome would be decided by military prowess. The climax came in the latter part of 1975 when SAF mounted an operation that succeeded where earlier attempts had failed in blocking the gap between Sarfait and the sea and cutting rebel supply tracks. Isolated from their bases in the PDRY the guerrillas on the Jebel

36. Briefing, January 1977.

continued to fight stubbornly, supported at this stage of the conflict by some 200 PDRY regular troops fighting on Omani territory. Between Sarfait and the most westerly of the 'lines', running north from Rakhyut, the Front possessed well hidden stocks of weapons and ammunition: rocket launchers, heavy and medium machine guns, anti-aircraft missiles, mines, grenades and small arms. This arsenal kept the rebels in action even when supplies no longer got through from the PDRY. The final large-scale operation of 1975 was the battle to locate, capture and destroy these stocks.

These last actions near Sarfait and elsewhere on the Jebel were tough. PDRY regular force artillery units, equipped with Soviet guns, fired upwards of a thousand rounds per month against SAF posts within range, particularly Sarfait. Rebels fired their SA-7 surface-to-air 'Arrow' missiles at SOAF helicopters and ground-attack aircraft, destroying one of each. Between 15 October and 24 November SAF artillery and SOAF Hunter aircraft retaliated against PDRY artillery positions,ceasing when it was politically advantageous to do so. By December 1975 most of the rebels had withdrawn northwards and westwards, seeking sanctuary in Marxist Yemen. A handful of rebels was still hiding in the hills, mostly on the eastern Jebel. Slowly but surely, their numbers were reduced by patient intelligence gathering and patrol action.[37] PDRY shelling tailed off and finally ceased. Civil development on the Jebel went ahead unimpeded. For the time-being at least, the war was over.[38] The security threats still facing Oman are serious and are fully discussed by Penelope Tremayne[39] and D L Price[40] in their respective essays. In essence they arise out of the de-stabilising effects of a rapid change from near medieval

37. Accompanied by five other rebels, a senior guerilla leader surrendered to SAF on 14 October 1977. He was Salim Mussalim al Awar Bait Said, and he complained to journalists in Salalah that he had become completely disillusioned with the extreme communism of the Popular Front. He stressed, however, that 'there are still many (in PDRY) who are determined to continue the fighting'. See Christopher Walker's report in the Times, (London, 18 October 1977).

38. But not the propaganda war. Aden's Voice of Oman Revolution has continued to broadcast PFLO military communiques. On 10 July 1977 it broadcast a congratulatory cable of Irish Republican support for the Front's armed struggle in Oman . (Follow-up to Briefing, 1977)

39. Tremayne (i), pp 45-48.

40. Price, pp 15-17.

backwardness to modern, oil-based affluence. Real though these problems are, they are outside the scope of this study.

The war in Dhofar demonstrated, in the way seen earlier in Greece, Iranian Azerbaijan, Malaya, the Phillipines and other places where Marxist imperialism has been resisted, that the driving force of successful defence comes from the threatened people themselves. This implies wise and strong leadership, capable of inspiring the nation through the use of appropriate propaganda. It has to be recognised, however, that national will is often insufficient to stand on its own against the onslaught of Soviet trained and equipped, and sometimes Soviet-bloc led and reinforced, rebel armies. The threatened people need help.

Invariably Soviet propaganda has presented such help as 'imperialism' or 'colonialism' or 'aggression'. A central theme of Russian 'detente' tactics is increased support for subversion, terrorism and rebellion in the non-communist world. Such activities depend to a considerable extent upon widespread acceptance of the 'noble lie' of inevitable triumph that forms the centrepiece of Marxist philosophy. Writing about Oman, Mrs Penelope Tremayne put it thus:

> It is usually said that wars of this kind, with this support, cannot be won by the legitimate forces in a country; and the very strength of this belief has reduced the chances of winning them nearly to nil. It is taken as axiomatic that, however unacceptable their actions or their leaders, the revolutionaries must triumph, simply because they are revolutionaries; the morale of those who stand against them is sapped at the start; the civil population see that the safest course will be to co-operate; outside help is withheld, from reluctance to back a losing horse; and in short the success of the revolutionaries' campaign is made three-parts certain irrespective of their cause or their capabilities. [41]

Defeatist attitudes of this sort received a massive boost from the American debacle in Indo-China. In contrast, Oman's brave defiance could make the West aware that the Soviet tactics of 'detente' are irresistible only so long as their victims, and the victims' friends, believe them to be irresistible.

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41. Tremayne (ii), p 195.

Discussion

The Dhofar communist party leaders have attributed failure in the Jebel campaign to too hasty attempts to enlarge party membership, the lack of a secure ideological base, and inadequate discipline within the party organisation.[42] By the nature of the communist creed, they could publish no other conclusion. For the creed teaches the faithful that the success of communist revolution is inevitable. Since the creed cannot be questioned, the only possible cause for a failed revolution is lack of communist purity and zeal on the part of its supporters. Thus the 'noble lie' is protected and blame attaches only to mortals. No doubt the confused and often vicious nature of the rebel leadership was a factor in their downfall. Mutual trust and respect between leaders and followers are essential pre-requisites for any endeavour. Through stupidity and mendacity the general command of PFLO forfeited these benefits. The reason for forfeiture was not, however, that they were insufficiently communist in outlook and method, but rather that they laboured their political dogma ad nauseam. The Popular Front might have done better to have concealed their true colours under a nationalist 'liberation' cloak, in the manner of Fidel Castro in Cuba, until victory had been won. A useful lesson for the Soviet Bloc from the Dhofar fiasco would be to accept the incompatibility of communism with Arab traditional values and in future to delay the imposition of proletarian dictatorship until all resistance has ended. In their schizophrenic minds communists are capable of proclaiming one set of lessons while inwardly digesting another. Therefore we should assume that the useful lesson has been learned.

In its early days Dhofari rebel propaganda drew its strength from the tight tribal organisation of the Jebalis, from the facts of poverty, backwardness and neglect that gave reality to their themes and messages, and from PDRY support on radio and other means. Government ineptitude gave apparent righteousness to the cause, and stimulated hatred of the regime and its agents. Recent revolutionary success in Aden seemed to demonstrate that victory would inevitably go to the insurgents. Allegiance was obtained half by conviction and

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42. Briefing, January 1977.

half by organisation and terror. These themes accomplished the mobilisation of the Jebalis and influenced opinion in Dhofar Province generally. They also provided the basis of 'legitimacy', valuable both internally and for the international audience. The military successes of the 'People's Liberation Army'added credibility, and by mid-1970 had begun the 'climate of collapse' in Salalah. The Sultan's Armed Forces were mocked as a 'paper tiger' and the idea that a 'long war' transforms the people and is a revolutionary asset was canvassed. After the new Sultan had come to power the Popular Front was forced to rely increasingly on terror instead of allegiance for its propaganda aimed at so-called 'friends', and their mobilisation themes were undermined by government deeds and appeals. Their legitimacy began to rest almost entirely upon their bond with international communism, which had its uses outside Oman but held small attraction within. The Front's failure to solve the key problem of keeping their mobilisation themes alive after the original grievances had been redressed was an important cause of eventual defeat. They were not even able to deploy successfully the theme of 'bad faith', which persuades rebels that all actions of government aimed at reconciliation are shams.

Soviet and international propaganda support for the Popular Front aimed at discrediting and isolating Oman, so that communist military assistance for the rebels would be unopposed by Western help to the government. Against nations that went to the Sultan's aid, particularly Britain, communist fronts applied domestic leverage in an effort to force withdrawal. The themes of guilt, certain rebel victory, counter-productivity, and the cost and futility of continued involvement were deployed. This campaign was potent, particularly since it coincided with America's problems in Vietnam. However, on the one side the rebels failed to inflict severe British, Iranian or Jordanian casualties, and on the other, the Sultan's troops and their allies avoided the type of tactics and methods that could be presented to the world as atrocities. Soviet leverage therefore had little to bite upon.

After Sultan Qaboos began his reforms, counter-revolutionary propaganda became an important element in the campaign to defeat the Popular Front. In particular we may admire the three-phase offensive to recover the Jebalis' loyalty: amnesty for rebels, their return to

the Jebel as firqas, and their role in winning general acceptance of Omani policies. Here we see the power of organisation as an instrument in government propaganda. Under rebel domination, or even if left on their own, Jebalis' susceptibility to Omani integration themes brought to them by pamphlets and loudspeakers might have been weak. It was the psychological factor of being, as it were, encircled, integrated into a group, and encouraged to participate in action that was decisive in the struggle for Jebali co-operation and trust. In addition the offensive helped to create a crisis of confidence in rebel ranks, to divide leaders from their followers, and to throw the communists psychologically onto the defensive. Omani themes were well chosen, involving the intensification of existing trends such as Islamic faith and national pride, rather than the introduction of novel concepts. Moreover these notions did not need to be played down or discarded after the rebel defeat; they merged naturally into the new integration campaign of Omani nation-building.

Although the role of propaganda in the Dhofar rebellion was, for both sides, important, it would be as misleading to overrate its effect as it would be dangerous to ignore it. Front propaganda depended for its effectiveness on the political appeal of independence and the military power of armed men. Unless Sultan Qaboos's new policies had been wise and sincere, and unless SAF had possessed the will and the ability to fight its way back onto the Jebel, the psychological counter-attack would have been so much talk. It was the combination of politics, military action and propaganda, the triad, that in turn posed so dangerous a rebel threat and so effective a government response. This study is interesting as an example of authority using the triad efficiently, unimpaired, it would seem, by ignorance of the proper role of counter-propaganda or reluctance over its use.

CHAPTER VIII

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

PART I: A PATTERN OF REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA

There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avow'd intent
To be a pilgrim [1]

The first part of this chapter draws together the evidence uncovered in the six case studies, compares one with another, and through the matching of like strands attempts to uncover the pattern of revolutionary propaganda. Starting at the beginnings, at the points where Hasan-i Sabbah returned to Persia after his training in Cairo and where Patrick Pearse decided to join the IRB, we find that revolutionaries begin with very little. A measure of unrest among the people, amounting in some cases to a predisposition to revolt, is often their only asset. This was the case with the leaders who formed the FLN, the Provisional IRA and the Popular Front. Zionism possessed power and structure in the form of the Jewish Agency and Haganah before 'constructive warfare' was launched in 1945, but that was because this movement had been at work for half a century. Menachem Begin, on the other hand, arrived in Palestine without power or authority, and within a remarkably short time was challenging the Agency and the Mandatory Administration. It seems clear that what revolutionary leaders lack in terms of structure of government, armed force, financial backing and recognised authority they make up for by conviction. This in turn calls for a great act of imagination.

The imagination behind a revolution distinguishes it from violent protest. By providing a purpose, a strategy to achieve that purpose, and a motive force to carry the strategy forward, it shapes an uncontrollable urge into effective action. Imagination has to compensate for a lack of material advantages. Creating the motive force may represent the greatest act of imagination, and this could be seen as the first and most enduring task of revolutionary propaganda. The motive force or cause, justification or propaganda assumption comes from the leadership. If we consider the

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1. John Bunyan (1628-1688), The Pilgrim's Progress, Part II.

pre-revolutionary situations facing the leaders of rebellion in the case studies, the flights of imagination required of each may be thought remarkable.

Hasan had been trained as a subversive propagandist but nevertheless the bold originality needed to form a break-away sect to challenge the established Islamic faith must have been huge. Pearse's ambitions were so far removed from ordinary people's that throughout Easter Week 1916 most Irishmen might have said that he had lost touch with reality. He saw not Home Rule but an independent Republic. Likewise Begin imagined not a National Home but a Jewish State throughout Palestine and Transjordan. The Algerian leaders had to rekindle the sparks of nationalism and social aspiration to justify a policy the ordinary Muslim could otherwise hardly comprehend. Provisional IRA leaders had to see a vision of the six northern counties freed of British influence, in which the power of the Protestant majority would be broken. The Dhofari rebel commanders needed to believe that an oppressive ruler could be defied, and their communist successors had to imagine a Marxist state in part or all of Oman.

The link between the leadership and the motive force must act in two ways. As well as creating the cause, the leaders must be inspired by it. Having imagined the New Jerusalem, they must believe in it and be absolutely convinced that it can be built. Mere confidence founded upon logical calculation is insufficient. That which is based on logic can be destroyed by logic. The worldly adage that politics is the art of the possible has no place in revolutionary philosophy. Belief needs to be blind to all discouragement. Followers will call this quality faith and detractors will describe it as fanaticism. By any name, it is the distinguishing characteristic of revolutionary leadership, and also one that colours revolutionary propaganda. This quality separates the revolutionary propagandist from, say, the commercial advertiser. The latter makes the best that he can of the wares he is promoting, whether or not he is personally persuaded of their merits: the revolutionary propagates from conviction. Some artists insist that inside every block of marble there is a fine sculpture waiting to be exposed. This exercise of imagination flies close to the revolutionary's belief that he can turn dreams into reality. Both begin with almost nothing, and proceed by

inspiration to fashion what at first only they can see. Whereas the artist works alone, the revolutionary needs others to share his dream. It is here that revolutionary propaganda turns outwards from the leadership to broadcast the motive force to a mass audience.

Sometimes the task of spreading the faith is assisted by pre-existing trends and attitudes, by pre-propaganda working in society, or by ready-made organisation and discipline by which the messages can more easily be put across. The Nizari Ismailis took over the organisation of the Old Preaching together with its tradition of opposition to Sunni orthodoxy; the IRB made what use it could of pre-existing prejudices and a revolutionary background both of which had been nearly extinguished by 1916. They were, however, strong on organisation, both through their own oath-bound structure and by their infiltration of larger bodies. Pre-propaganda amongst Palestinian and world Jewry prior to the autumn of 1945 had all but taken control of Zionist policy. It needed only to be touched to come alive in the revolutionary cause. Jewish organisation in the Promised Land and overseas was complex and strong. In contrast, the FLN began their rebellion without the benefit of pre-propaganda, with few of the desirable pre-existing trends working among the Muslim masses, and with almost no organisation. By the calculated use of terror, these handicaps were somehow overcome. This experience suggests that a sense of grievance and a dislike of government do not necessarily create a pre-revolutionary situation. Unless there is a purpose and hope, oppression may be borne indefinitely. Pre-propaganda provides these elements, and reflects the early work of the leader.

The Provisionals began with strong pre-propaganda and massive social prejudices and with community organisations that were easily penetrated and used for revolutionary purposes. Prior to 1970 the Dhofari rebels exploited real grievances and a vigorous tradition of independence amongst the Jebalis, whose tribal organisation made them receptive audiences. These advantages might have been developed by the communists who assumed command of the Popular Front, but for various reasons they let them slip through their fingers, into the waiting hand of authority.

All the studies confirmed the importance of organisation. Where it already exists, it must be strengthened, in the manner demonstrated

by Hasan, Begin and the Provisionals, and in the way that Sinn Féin and the original IRA took over the organisational task after Pearse's death. Where it is absent, as in Algeria, it must be established as quickly as possible. The OPA and other instruments of ALN-FLN 'alternative authority' illustrated how well these leaders understood this need. By their failure to retain control over Jebali organisation, or to develop an alternative, the Popular Front's communist leaders exposed their movement to eventual defeat. We may conclude that organisation is essential to effective revolutionary propaganda and, in so far as our own area of research is concerned, agree with Ellul's partial definition of propaganda, which stresses the organisational factor.[2]

Conflict propaganda is usually directed at 'friends', 'neutrals' and 'enemies', and in wars between nations the three groups are usually clearly identifiable. Revolutionary propaganda also addresses these three target audiences. Inside a state, however, the dividing lines are often indistinct and are liable to change. The revolutionary propagandist may initially regard almost the entire population as neutral, with the regime and its agents, particularly the security forces, as the enemy. Friends are created out of neutrals, becoming 'militants, adherents or sympathisers',[3] while at the same time other neutrals may opt to support the government and thus swell the ranks of the 'enemy'. As opinion polarises, the middle ground shrinks until there are few domestic neutrals left. The neutral audience is now the external, overseas public. The propaganda campaign to win members and supporters is generally known as the mobilisation phase. It is the period when the leaders' motive force is let loose to affect a wide audience.[4]

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2. See p 8.

3. See p 187.

4. Terrorist groups such as the 19th century anarchists and today's German 'Red Army Faction' and Italy's 'Red Brigade' may be seen as the creation of strong revolutionary motive forces that have taken hold of the leadership and a small élite, but have failed to attract mass support. Thus these groups tend to regard almost everyone as 'enemies'.

Mobilisation propaganda has the tasks of convincing its neutral and friendly audiences that the cause is just and worthy of support, that violence in the attainment of the goal is unavoidable and therefore justified, and that all should commit themselves to a movement which is bound to triumph. These objectives may be expressed in themes and messages. Some typical examples from the case studies are listed below. For reasons that will emerge presently, some of these mobilisation messages are also aimed at the 'enemy'. These samples are illustrations only. They could be worded in many different ways, or broken down into other components. They serve, however, to demonstrate the pattern that emerges from this research. In whatever other form they might be expressed, the sum effect would probably be much the same.

Mobilisation Themes and Messages

Theme 1: 'Righteousness'

Message: 'Our cause (freedom, nationalism, ideology, religious belief or whatever) is righteous. Our authority derives from the (divine) right of our cause. Therefore, friends, prepare for the struggle; neutrals, join us or support us; enemies, abandon hope. (The cause is sometimes set out in a proclamation or manifesto. It provides the basis of a later theme - 'legitimacy'.)

Theme 2: 'Hatred'

Message: 'The enemy (government, regime, etc) blocks the path of our morally righteous aspirations. There is no peaceful course that we can follow. The enemy and his agents, therefore, deserve our hatred. See also what the enemy have done to suppress us (examples are given). These injustices cry out for vengeance. Since our cause is just, and as no alternative method exists, we must resort to violence, which is a form of justice. All who resist are evil. Friends, you have a right and a duty to kill. Neutrals should see such acts as just.'

Theme 3: 'Inevitable Triumph'

Message: 'We, being righteous, are certain to win, because of "the inevitable triumph of justice". Friends and neutrals, the spirit of the mass is invincible. We shall overcome. Enemies, your harsh counter-measures serve only to drive more people onto our side. Therefore the victory is bound to be ours.'

Theme 4: 'Allegiance'

Message: 'Friends and neutrals, commit yourselves completely to the cause, or be seen as traitors or cowards.'

Theme 5: 'Moral Certainty'

Message: 'Friends, do not regard your violent actions as murder or as other crimes. You are soldiers fighting a Just War. Enemies and neutrals, take note.'

These five paraphrased themes or similar messages accompanied the mobilisation phases of all six cases studied. They express in propaganda terms the motive power of the revolutionary leadership. Only the first theme, relating to the cause, is essentially a theme of ideas. This more than any other is the one that may need the help of pre-propaganda and pre-existing attitudes and social aspiration. Unless it can be made to stick none of the others is likely to survive. If it is accepted, it lends weight to all the others, which derive their logic from the idea of justice. Moreover themes 2-5 can all be strengthened by organisation and by facts. Once absorbed into a group, whether this be as an activist in the military wing or as a supporter in some front, the individual can be 'surrounded' and manipulated psychologically. Once committed by his actions, which may involve the act of killing, in the manner of the Assassins and the ALN, or some relatively trivial act such as refusal to pay rent or writing a letter to the newspaper, the recruit needs to justify his action. Themes 2-5 provide justification. Propaganda then takes on a progressive character, each message justifying the last act and encouraging the next. The actions of members provide one sort of fact that can assist mobilisation. The other sort that is needed must be provided by the 'enemy', by government and its security forces.

The importance of facts to propaganda was explained in the introductory chapter and has been borne out in every case study. They provide the truth around which lies of interpretation and intention can, if necessary, be woven. They establish reference points and they form the kernels of myths. Mobilisation must therefore take place in a tense, pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation. Organisation brings the mass into conflict with the enemy as in

Palestine and Ulster, or activists commit violent acts that bring down retribution or stern counter-measures in the style of the FLN at Philippeville - the Marighella formula.[5] This need of facts continues throughout the rebellion and affects equally all the themes listed below.

There is one theme of revolutionary propaganda which belongs everywhere, yet does not fit neatly into any one compartment. It is included now, as it can be important during the mobilisation phase, particularly, as in the Algerian example, where a lack of pre-propaganda caused the revolutionary leadership to rely upon harsh measures to ensure obedience.

Theme 6: 'Terror'

Message: 'Oppose us, friend, neutral or enemy, and you die.'

This coercive message depends upon the support of capable activists. It enforces discipline inside the movement, deprives authority of information and other assistance from the civilian population, and can partially paralyse the apparatus of government. Skilfully applied it can strengthen theme 3, inevitable triumph. From the Assassins to the Provisionals, it demonstrates the alliance between action and words that is so important a facet of revolutionary strategy. The theme was well described by the saying 'Kill one, frighten ten thousand', and with today's news media the indirect effect can be far greater.

The themes of mobilisation are continued as necessary throughout the entire revolution. As the struggle gets fully into its stride they are joined by what we may call the 'conflict themes'. These build upon the work achieved by mobilisation propaganda, consolidating the commitment of 'friends' and undermining the morale and certainty of 'enemies'. In war propaganda, the messages aimed at an enemy audience are almost always designed to induce surrender. In revolutionary situations (and in wars conducted by revolutionary armies) propaganda aims to turn 'enemies' into 'friends' or, where this is impossible, to induce ambivalence that may amount to a form of neutrality. Because this ambition is always at the back of the revolutionary mind, the

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5. See p 86.

themes that accompany the mobilisation phase are directed in part at the 'enemy'. A politician, administrator or soldier who defects to the rebel cause provides by his act, and its subsequent publicity, much valuable propaganda.

The conflict themes may surface in any order. This listing reflects neither sequence nor relative importance.

Themes of Conflict

Theme 7: Glorification of Heroes

Message: 'Neutrals, see how our heroes challenge the mighty regime, and how their deeds prove the moral strength of the rebellion. Enemies, question your previous assumptions and doubt the legitimacy of your authority. Friends, be proud.'

Theme 8: In Praise of Violence

Message: 'All, see how the spilling of blood purifies those who shed it, freeing them from past inferiority and blinding them to the cause.'

Theme 9: Justified Reaction

Message: 'All, our violence is simply a justified reaction to the institutionalised violence unleashed by the regime. Authority must bear responsibility for whatever death and suffering our heroes inflict.'

Theme 10: Long War

Message: 'All, time is on the side of the rebellion. To win, we have only to survive. For the regime to win, they must eliminate every last one of us and extinguish our ideology, and this is obviously impossible. Moreover, because time is on our side, unless the government can win quickly, it cannot win at all. Protracted war transforms the mass, and is an asset.'

Theme 11: Guilt

Message: 'Enemy, feel guilty. You brought us to rebel; you know in your hearts that our cause is just; you know, too, that your methods and intentions are rotten. Let guilt seep into your subconscious to undermine your resolve and paralyse your judgement.'

Theme 12: Bad Faith

Message: 'Friends, attempts by the regime to build bridges between authority and the supporters of the revolution are traps for the unwary. The regime is insincere, their offers are designed to turn you once again into obedient slaves.'

Theme 13: Security Force Incompetence

Message: 'All, the security forces cannot penetrate our secret organisation and are blundering about like bulls in a dark china shop. They arrest the innocent, shoot the blameless, terrorise the defenceless. It is they, not us, who deserve to be called 'terrorists'. The enemy is a Paper Tiger.'

Theme 14: Legitimacy

Message: 'All, the regime has forfeited respect and its right to obedience. Our alternative regime, being founded on justice and recognised through the expressed will of the masses, inherits the right to your respect and obedience. Henceforth, regard our authority as the proper focus for your allegiance and trust.'

Theme 15: Credibility

Message: 'All, our statements are true, our promises are fulfilled, our power to do as we wish is proven. The words of the regime are empty and its actions futile. Because we have won so far we must win in the end. Ours, being the credible authority, is a safe as well as a proper focus for your allegiance and trust.'

These themes of conflict appeared in nearly but not quite all of the six case studies. There is no evidence that the Assassins or the Popular Front made use of themes designed to attack the conscience of the regime, such as 'Justified Reaction' or 'Guilt'. Perhaps because this type of appeal is effective mainly against enemies educated in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, its use is limited. They were used by the FLN and their supporters against France (Mrs Castle's remark being a good illustration[6]), and by the Popular Front's international network against Britain. In Ireland Father Campbell[7] spelt out the 'Justified Reaction' theme in copybook fashion. The 'Long War' idea has received support from revolutionary authors such as Debray and Fanon, who link it to the theme of 'Inevitable Triumph'. Another writer, Mr Robert Taber, expressed these ideas clearly. In The War of the Flea he wrote, 'but the counterinsurgency experts have yet to win a war. At this writing, they are certainly losing one'.[8] And also, 'No

6. See p 191.

7. See p 246.

8. Robert Taber The War of the Flea (New York, 1965), p 173.

small nation, and few great ones, can stand the deprivation indefinitely. Yet the painful fact is that the guerrillas, for their part, can carry on indefinitely'.[9] The writer sees such statements as propaganda in their own right, designed to weaken government and public resolve and confidence. They are based on selected, credible truth, and ignore the many facts that contradict. Several of the themes of conflict were missing from the Easter Rising study, which was essentially concerned with mobilisation. Examination of the independence struggle of 1919-21 would, however, uncover them all. The 'Bad Faith' theme appeared only in studies where government attempted reconciliation, as in Algeria. It was used by the Provisionals immediately after the period studied, as the new Secretary of State, Mr Whitelaw, tried to build bridges to the Catholic community.

'Legitimacy' and 'Credibility' may be seen as the culminating themes of conflict propaganda. Once the revolutionaries have accumulated massive strength in these two areas they are ready to launch the themes of victory, which we will come to later. Legitimacy is an idea, developed from the original motive force of the leadership. It is the imagination of the revolution taking hold of a wide audience. Although closely linked to the theme of 'Righteousness', it implies acceptance as well as ambition. We may feel that for every hundred proclamations issued, only one or two ever achieved true legitimacy. Just as legitimacy suggests a moral right to govern, 'Credibility' claims the physical ability. In revolutions that rely upon superior military strength as the final arbiter, credibility rests largely on evidence of such strength. Where the revolutionary strategy is based on leverage, proven ability to maintain a certain level of violent activity may be sufficient.

In all revolutions the insurgents need to keep their casualties to a minimum, both to retain their offensive ability and to maintain morale in their ranks. In some campaigns that depend upon the gradual acceptance of new ideas by 'neutrals', such as the Assassins' preaching, this need is magnified by the necessity of continuing in action over

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9. Taber, p 45.

a long period of time. Survival propaganda therefore runs parallel with the themes of conflict, to render ineffective government counter-measures.

Themes of Survival

Theme 16: Counter-Productivity

Message: 'Enemy, this method, this unit, this individual that is being turned against us is in the first place brutal, indiscriminate and offensive to liberal opinion everywhere, in the second place he or it increases mass support for our movement, and thirdly he or it is ineffective. For your own good, do not any longer use the unit, method or individual.

Theme 17: Special Status

Message: 'Enemy, recognise our activists as soldiers fighting a Just War. Do not dare treat them as common criminals. Give us all the benefits but none of the disadvantages of belligerent status.'[10]

Theme 18: Security

Message: 'Friends, have no fear for your own safety. If you die we promise the immortality of martyrdom. If you fall into the hands of the enemy our blackmail or propaganda will rescue you.'

The theme of 'Terror' is used to support or replace some of these survival themes. The 'Counter-Productivity' argument works only against governments already affected by 'Guilt'. It needs to be carried to its target audience by front organisations whose motives cannot be questioned. If successful, it strengthens the guilt transfer. However its main purpose is tactical, to weaken the security operation and enable activists to operate in greater safety. The Northern Ireland study provided the best examples, but Palestine and Algeria showed earlier application. Where guilt is ineffective, terror can take its place. The Assassins used selective terror to dissuade political and

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10. In June 1977 the Geneva Conference on Humanitarian Law in Armed Conflict adopted Protocol II, making fresh provisions on laws to operate during non-international armed conflicts, such as armed rebellion. Open to broad interpretation, these laws seem destined to be used more for purposes of propaganda than mercy. See L C Green 'The New Law of Armed Conflict', article in The Canadian Yearbook of International Law, Vol XV, 1977.

religious leaders, officials and soldiers from taking their duties to suppress the Nizari Ismailis too far. Even in conditions that favour the 'Counter-Productivity' theme, terror backs it up. Catholics who dared join the RUC, the UDR or any government force were murdered.

The 'Special Status' theme was used by the IRB, the Irgun, the ALN and the Provisionals. By granting the claim to the prisoners of 1916 the British transferred legitimacy as well as releasing activists who planned and led the war that began in 1919. When Mr Whitelaw gave way before this argument in 1972, a move that he subsequently regretted, he weakened the moral basis of the Northern Ireland administration and strengthened terrorism from all sides.[11] Authoritarian regimes such as the Seljuks and the Sultan of Oman could not be reached by such appeals. The 'Security' theme exploits any weakness on the government's part over the status of prisoners, since once political crime is recognised as distinct from other offences, the release of 'political prisoners' can be made a bargaining condition for a truce or other concession. This, too, can be backed up by terror, as the Irgun showed. By kidnapping hostages the revolutionaries can attempt to blackmail authority for the release or safety of captured activists, a method made familiar by recent events.

If revolutionaries can mobilise mass support, remain in action, and intensify the conflict until they have huge stocks of legitimacy and credibility, they may be ready to use the theme or themes of victory. These themes place the government at checkmate. Generally speaking the first is used against an alien, colonial or quasi-colonial government and the second against a domestic regime.

Themes of Victory

Theme 19: Cost and Futility of Resistance

Message: 'Enemy, see the cost in lives and treasure, and in international respect and domestic strife, of vainly trying to suppress an irresistible and just cause. For your own sakes, give up.'

Theme 20: Climate of Collapse

Message: 'Enemy, your society is rotten, your government unjust and without legitimacy, your security forces incapable. Chaos and terror will reign until you reject the present regime. For your own sakes, be realistic and accept us.'

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11. See Wilkinson, p 128.

The 'Cost and Futility' theme accompanies a campaign of leverage, creating if it is successful the Asset-to-Liability-Shift. We saw it at work in Palestine, in Algeria, in Ulster, and, in respect of British and Iranian aid, in Dhofar. 'Climate of Collapse' also uses leverage, in this case internal leverage of public opinion that demands an end to the bloodshed and anarchy at any cost. It may have been part of Hasan-i Sabbah's strategy eventually to deploy this appeal. The FLN were able to use it in conjunction with 'Cost and Futility' because of the large colon presence in Algeria. In mid-1970 the Popular Front was able to project the theme in Dhofar. Although both themes can be valuable as auxiliary weapons in a revolutionary campaign designed to end in final military victory, their real significance lies in their use as decisive blows in campaigns where propaganda is the primary weapon, with violence as a supporting arm.

These twenty themes are obviously not exclusive, nor, as we have seen from the studies, is every one applied in every revolution. They represent, nevertheless, the results of careful analysis of the six cases in this thesis and may be accepted as the common pattern of revolutionary propaganda emerging from those cases. The sample of campaigns was small, and the process of selection that sought examples interesting to this research may have produced rebellions with a higher than average propaganda content. The writer believes that further research would tend to confirm the pattern, but he also accepts that the reader will require that research to be done before he necessarily shares this view.

The Role and Importance of Revolutionary Propaganda

The foregoing reservations apply equally to deductions on the role and importance of propaganda as a weapon system in revolutionary hands. The cases have supplied ample evidence that propaganda played an active role. They showed, too, that its effectiveness depended upon its interaction with politics and military action - the triad. In no case would propaganda on its own have made progress. Hasan's da'is would have been put to death by Seljuk troops, Pearse would have been ignored, Begin's proclamation would have been so much waste paper. Without the threat posed by armies in Morocco and Tunisia, and the enormous problems posed by displaced people, leverage against France might never have won

victory for the FLN. Provisional propaganda depended upon facts provided by their activists and the British response, just as Popular Front appeals seemed credible only so long as their fighters posed a severe military threat. Yet propaganda was important, in every case.

Its importance may be measured by consideration of the outcomes had propaganda not worked in the ways that it did. If our interpretation of Assassin strategy is correct, the main thrust of that movement was to convert the masses. This strategic propaganda was backed up by terror and tactical propaganda that dislocated effective counter-measures, keeping the campaign alive for many decades. Without the New Preaching, the killings would have been pointless. The Easter Rising itself was a military disaster. It could possibly have destroyed the physical force tradition and consigned Pearse's republican ideas to oblivion. Propaganda, including the style of the deed itself, procured the opposite results. Official Zionist strategy recognised the impossibility of forcing Britain to abandon the Mandate or concede interim demands for increased immigration. Without its international propaganda machinery the Jews would have had no effective means to balance the Arab pressure resisting any change to the White Paper terms. Begin's violence might have been disowned by the Yishuv and discredited by the British had it not been for the strident voice of Revisionist propaganda. Eventually the 'Cost and Futility' theme caused Britain to quit. Without the benefit of propaganda to mobilise the Catholics, the Provisional campaign in 1971 and 1972 would probably have fallen as flat as the 1950s cross-border operations. The appearance of a 'freedom struggle' that influenced American and other foreign opinion at that time was the outcome of skilful publicity. When, in the summer of 1972, Provisional propaganda faded, the IRA no longer posed so severe a threat. In the case of the Popular Front this test can best be applied by observing how, once the Sultan began to steal their clothes, the rebels in their nakedness were exposed to defeat.

Of the six cases, this last was the only one where the revolutionaries were defeated outright by the security forces, and it was the campaign with the weakest rebel propaganda. It seems likely that the original motive force that had brought the Assassins into existence had died out of that movement before outside forces crushed the bases. The two cases that ended in victory for the revolutionaries,

Palestine and Algeria, enjoyed strong propaganda. The same can be said of the IRB and the subsequent struggle for Irish independence. These facts seem to justify the conclusion that on the evidence of the cases studied propaganda is not just an important component of revolution, but an essential one, and in certain circumstances it can be the decisive element.

Additionally we may consider the proposal that, but for propaganda, there might never have been revolutions at all. This view is arguable. Some might say that it is social and economic deprivation, frustrated nationalism, religious zeal or military oppression that cause people to rebel. Certainly such forces often lie at the heart of revolutionary situations, to the benefit of the rebel leadership and embarrassment of authority. They do not of themselves make or implement the decision to resort to violence. A nation can be committed to war by its government, and the armed forces and apparatus of state will respond without hesitation. A disaffected population can be committed to revolution only if it has a leader of imagination who succeeds in propagating the motive force in the form of effective propaganda. A vague pre-disposition to rebel is transformed by such means into strategy, organisation and action.

In no case studied was it possible for authority to counter revolutionary propaganda by political or military means. Answers when they came, were in kind. Frequently security forces provided ammunition for hostile appeals, indeed some of the outstanding propaganda successes scored by rebels in these studies have arisen in this way; Maxwell's executions, the Exodus episode, the reaction at Philippeville, interrogation-in-depth. The revolutionary battleground resembles a minefield in which any false move can be costly.

There is some evidence that revolutionary propaganda encourages amongst rebels a race to extremes. The need of those under propaganda's spell to justify past actions, and the propensity of the themes and messages to exaggerate emotional responses may tend to drive revolutionaries beyond the limits of reason and cause them to reject restraint. Personal disagreements over tactics or about the true nature of the cause are important factors too, but our studies indicate that propaganda intended for moderate goals can be quoted by extremists to

justify immoderate ambitions. Perhaps W B Yeat s had the civil war that followed Irish independence in mind when he wrote:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity. 12

Some Techniques and Technical Characteristics of Revolutionary Propaganda

This research has not been concerned with the psychological techniques of propaganda per se. This section attempts only to identify some technical factors that may distinguish revolutionary propaganda from other forms of persuasion. Some aspects have been mentioned already. We have noted the remarkable stretch of imagination often needed to conceive of the rebellion in the first place, the total and unshakable faith that must be placed in the cause and its motive power, the need to spread this faith in undiminished form amongst followers, and the importance to this task of organisation. Although we saw an example of successful revolution beginning without pre-propaganda and pre-existing attitudes favourable to the rebels, the difficulties of managing without these benefits were clear and, in other cases, the advantages that they bestowed were obvious. The hazy and shifting dividing line between 'friends', 'neutrals' and 'enemies', the three main target audiences, has been observed as a characteristic of a revolutionary situation, which is linked to the revolutionary technique of trying to convert the second two groups to their cause. Most of the themes of rebellion require facts to give them credibility, and as well as providing some facts by their own actions, insurgents lie in wait for the government to make facts that can by interpretation be turned to their advantage. The whole concept of 'survival propaganda' may be seen as a technique peculiar to revolutions. The way that

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12. W B Yeats 'The Second Coming' in Peter Allt (Ed) The Variorum Edition of the poems of W B Yeats (New York, 1957), pp 401-402 (lines 1-8).

propaganda, to be effective, needs to be closely coordinated with political and military action may be characteristic of all conflict propaganda. The studies have, however, shown that this concept of the 'triad' is vital in revolutions.

The rebel is always 'at home' with his target audience and this characteristic of revolutionary propaganda puts him at an advantage when dealing with an alien regime. The absence of this advantage in situations involving the overthrow of a domestic government is one of the reasons why this type of rebellion is much more difficult to achieve than the throwing off of some colonial style 'yoke'. However, a domestic government that allows itself to become psychologically distant from the people may expose itself in rather the same way as a foreign administration, by losing its ability to communicate effectively. Identification with a significant section of society and acceptance as a leader and saviour by that mass is an important technique of revolutionary propaganda. Hasan, Begin and Pearse demonstrated the technique in action, although in Pearse's case the process cost him his life. The leadership of the FLN and Provisional IRA, and the early Popular Front commanders also mastered this technique.

Within the revolutionary leadership, discussion and even dissention are commonly found. We saw the IRB split over objectives and methods, Zionists divided on the issue of violence, rivalry between the FLN 'External Committee' and the ALN, and similar confusion in the upper echelons of the Provisionals and the Popular Front. Marxist movements permit such discussions, albeit within strictly limited terms of reference, as part of their appraisal of the 'objective circumstances'. These internal dialectics may affect the form of the movement's propaganda, but the propaganda itself must not hint at disunity or offer alternative explanations, messages or themes. By its totalitarian nature, effective propaganda excludes contradiction and discussion, a fact that remains true whether the cause that it serves has high moral virtue or evil intent. It cannot be satisfied with partial success, it must produce near unanimity. Opposing voices must be silent, where they have not been won over to the cause. Propaganda tries to dominate the individuals who compose its mass audience, influencing them by all possible routes, in the realm of feelings as well as ideas. It furnishes men with a complete explanation

of society and provides immediate incentives to action. Absorbed within the revolutionary organisation, committed by their deeds, and psychologically manipulated by every available form of media and stimulation, the converts adopt a mystical attitude in which their minds are open only to facts, propositions and emotions that correspond with what has gone before, and are closed to rational arguments.

These characteristics explain why nearly all revolutionary propaganda uses the emotional message style. Logical arguments are too easily countered by the logic of authority. This emphasis upon the heart rather than the mind applies equally to messages addressed to 'neutrals' and 'enemies', although here they may be dressed up a little in the garments of logic, becoming what Dr Thomson has termed the quasi-rational/half emotional message style.[13]

So far as the generally accepted techniques of propaganda, listed on p20, are concerned, all appeared at one time or another in the case studies. Commonest were Glittering Generalities, Card Stacking, Symbolism, Name-Calling and Character-Assassination, Vagueness and Guilt Association. The last differs from the theme of 'Guilt' in a narrow, technical sense only. The theme is likely to be constant, to be picked up and used whenever possible. The technique involves the act of transferring guilt, making use of the best psychological approach and so on. Here is a theme which by constant application has been brought to the status of a technique in its own right.

Lenin distinguished between propaganda suitable for the intelligensia and 'agitation' appropriate for the masses. The first dealt in abstract political theories and idealistic appeals while the second concentrated upon visible and pressing economic, social and material grievances. We can only guess that Hasan's da'is adopted similar tactics. The Fatimid directive advised each missionary 'not to overtax the intelligence and the patience of his audience ... He must learn to observe the people, recognise the state of their minds, their abilities, extent of their endurance'.[14] Pearse and the IRB

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13. See p 17.

14. See p 66.

also tailored their propaganda to the consumers, using drama, history and cultural and political appeals towards the educated middle-class who composed most of the leadership of the 1916 Rising. In the subsequent mobilisation of the Irish masses, the IRA and Sinn Féin used the simpler emotional messages generated by the executions, arrests and suppression.

The egalitarian nature of Zionism allowed a nearly constant appeal to penetrate all levels of the Yishuv, and the cause drew much of its strength from the fact that deep emotional and idealistic conviction was found everywhere, not merely among an élite. This was not the case in Algeria, where nationalism was an idea initially comprehensible only to the middle-class, educated Muslim. Appeals to the rural population in the remote mountains where the rebellion began had to deal with poverty, oppression and fear, the last being made real by ruthless enforcement. In the cities the urban poor were made to take sides by terror in the first place, and by the appropriate exploitation of French counter-measures in the second. Forced to choose between Muslim terror and French terror, they supported their own. The Provisional IRA influenced sophisticated Catholics in the North and sympathetic audiences overseas by pursuing aims such as civil rights and opposition to Stormont, while mobilising the mass mainly on hatred of Protestant domination, job discrimation, economic deprivation and security force counter-measures. In Dhofar the tribes were brought to rebel by themes of injustice, poverty and neglect. When Marxists assumed control they apparently forgot Lenin's advice and tried to inspire their simple followers with communist dogma that audiences neither understood nor welcomed. The need to address appropriate themes and messages to each level of society can therefore be listed as another characteristic of revolutionary technique, and as a general rule it is at the élite that idealism should be aimed, while the rank and file are influenced by appeals that relate to their immediate needs and circumstances.

Different types of propaganda have found separate ways of overcoming the limitations imposed by Parkinson's Law[15] that argues that 'propaganda begins and ends at home'. A German manufacturer who

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15. See p 15.

wishes to sell his product in Japan will employ a Japanese advertising firm. In war a belligerent will use a friendly national from the enemy state to broadcast messages to that audience. The second method can sometimes be used in revolutionary warfare, as the Dhofar example showed, but other techniques are also employed. For the rebel leadership the problem has two parts: how to reach the 'enemy', that is the section of the population surrounding and forming the government which, for sociological or other reasons, is impervious to direct appeals, and how to reach 'neutrals' overseas, whose support can be essential. One technique to overcome the first problem involves the use of 'fronts', or 'front spokesmen'. As early as the Assassins we saw how a respected theologian was persuaded to speak with respect of the Nizari Ismailis to his students, making by his reputation an effect that direct appeals could not equal. This was achieved by terror. In the Algerian and Ulster examples many groups and spokesmen carried messages useful to the FLN or to the Provisionals to French and English audiences respectively. A few acted with the sole intention of helping those revolutions, but most were motivated by concern over some matter removed from the main conflict, such as civil rights, moral issues, legal argument or a desire to find common ground. Terror was not the primary instrument: sometimes by chance and sometimes by subtle encouragement such individuals or groups spread rebel themes with conviction. Fronts are also needed inside the 'converted' section of the population who can speak to the media on behalf of the revolutionaries without being seen as belonging. General Kitson has shown how rebel organisation divides key leaders between covert and overt sections, enabling the propaganda apparatus to function 'above ground' so long as the regime will tolerate it.[16] For fear of libel action if nothing else, newsmen in modern society treat such spokesmen as if they were neutral sources, thus raising the credibility of their statements.

The spreading of revolutionary propaganda to overseas 'neutral' audiences is more difficult. The Jews and the Irish had the advantage of strongly organised ethnic groups resident in some of their target territories, and thus overcame the problem by using these as outlets.

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16. Kitson, pp 126-130.

Being resident, the groups were capable of presenting messages in forms acceptable to the rest of the population. The Algerian nationalists had no such advantage outside the Arab world, but managed instead to persuade several nations to allow rebel publicity bureaus to be established on their territory. The Popular Front expanded the 'front' technique to the international scene, something that can always be done by revolutionaries who receive the backing of one of the great powers, or of the diffused groups known as the 'New Left'. Without friends overseas a rebel movement would find it difficult to employ leverage against its enemies. However in a divided world it may be seen as unlikely that no country would wish to fish the troubled waters of some other state's domestic difficulties, so the prospect of revolutionaries having to fight unsupported seems small.

The propaganda that is aimed outwards by insurgents is not always the same as the messages directed inwards at the faithful. (The totalitarian style is present only if overseas ethnic groups need to be whipped up to revolutionary pitch. They become 'friends' rather than neutrals, and receive the full emotional appeal.) The style directed at the 'enemy' and at 'neutrals' is often quasi-rational, dry, more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger. To neutrals the important objective is recognition, thus 'legitimacy' is the main theme. To the 'enemy', messages are designed to confuse, divide, embarrass, anger. The regime must be humiliated and people must lose faith and hope. 'Red Herrings' and a constant demand for public enquiries are useful techniques. It is best if the population is unaware until it is too late that it is being led down the road to 'the climate of collapse' or 'cost and futility', or both. The threat should not seem so real that the government can rally the masses to counter it. Yet the theme of 'inevitable triumph' can seep unnoticed into the public consciousness, preparing it to yield when the time is ripe.

This slow, stealthy process is important to the strategy of leverage when applied against a domestic regime. This is really the only way that a minority revolutionary movement can hope to gain power. By the combined use of interim aims and survival propaganda it may reach a commanding position. Interim aims can attract far larger support than the strategic purpose. Their attainment raises prestige, increases mass support and leads on to the next objective.

The Provisional campaign of 1971 and 1972 is an excellent example. If in the process the right of the government to protect its own and community interests is jeopardised, either by guilt association or outside leverage, and if the government's supporters lose heart, and begin to withhold their commitment, to 'sit on the fence', then the rebels may be able to proclaim the 'climate of collapse'. The 'Marighella formula' poses severe dangers for any government and these case studies have shown their reality. Yet in the liberal democratic state there may now exist an over-reaction, a reluctance to employ lawful, restrained and necessary measures until it is too late, out of a fear of falling into the trap. If this is the case, Carlos Marighella may inadvertently have opened the way to leverage with what has been called the 'ratchet effect', which slowly and irreversibly moves events towards revolutionary victory.

External leverage, such as Begin's campaign, the FLN's eventual strategy and the Provisionals' pressure, has seemed to work best when the rebels challenge an alien government, and when international influence can be brought to bear. As the age of European empires fades into history we may expect to see this method working to prevent assistance from reaching a threatened state, as was attempted in Dhofar, and through international support for minority groups inside states.

All that has been said so far depends upon the revolutionaries being able to get their messages across to their target audiences. More perhaps than in any other modern communication setting, rebel propagandists can still make effective use of face-to-face persuasion, hand-bills and posters printed in a cellar, and the group indoctrination of horizontal propaganda, all of which have been with us for centuries. The dedication achieved by the motive force provides convincing, fearless da'is, backed up as necessary by the terror of the fida'is. Naturally this internal propaganda can be and, when possible, should be strengthened by modern media, but dedication not sophistication is the key factor. When, however, it comes to influencing 'neutrals' and 'enemies', these simple aids are insufficient. The target audiences are out of reach, scattered, free of organisation or rebel discipline, and sceptical of direct appeals. In modern times, these audiences can best be reached through the mass media, newspapers, television, radio and so on. In the chapter dealing with Ulster it was suggested

that because of their role of interpreting news - facts - to the public, the media had become the battlefield of the propaganda war. This assessment explains why the penetration, influencing, or if these fail, confusing of the media are vital revolutionary objectives. If rebels can make or engineer appropriate facts, and then ensure that they are interpreted to the public in accordance with the movement's propaganda assumptions and objectives, they are well placed to win this part of their campaign.

The news media is not too easily penetrated, influenced or confused. We in the West see the media as having a duty to present news, and we accept that this includes the right to interpret. We also attach importance to the freedom of the press and broadcasting corporations to criticise aspects of the national scene, including government policy and action, from the declared standpoint of editorial policy. The media in authoritarian and totalitarian countries do not share these rights, but we would applaud any criticism that they dared utter against oppression or in support of any move towards freedom. Liberal democracies are not so well conducted that abuse of authority is unknown. The media, therefore, has a constant duty to uncover and expose abuse; we should be hypocritical if we praised this abroad and condemned it at home. In a revolutionary situation the abuse of power by authority is more than ever likely, criticism more than ever necessary. Few journalists will wish to assist violent and possibly anti-democratic forces. Yet in their role of critic of the state and its reactions they may be placed in a delicate position and be made vulnerable to influence or confusion, while a committed revolutionary concealed in their ranks could use his position to good effect. Be this as it may, the central position of the news media in any modern campaign of revolutionary propaganda emerges from these studies as a significant technical characteristic.

A final characteristic is also linked to criticism. It arises out of the tendency of the arts, 'youth', the political left, the liberal-minded and others whose inclination or role is to criticise society to be open to new ideas and, therefore, be receptive of revolutionary propaganda. Interest and sympathy may dissolve if the revolutionary groups turn out to be intolerant or violent. Nevertheless this proclivity, which may derive from no less noble a motive than the

intent to be a pilgrim, provides the revolutionary with a ready market for his pre-propaganda and sometimes creates a situation in which it is the government rather than the rebel movement which has to prove its moral worth and superior intentions.

PART II: POSSIBLE COUNTER-MEASURES

> The evil that is in the world always comes of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence, if they lack understanding. [17]

Counter-Measures in the Cases Studied

Regimes that are faced with revolutionary challenges usually begin with all the material advantages; structure of government, police, military, money and authority. Either the people have voted them to power and they rule by consent, or else their authority rests on an ability to discourage or suppress opposition. The challenge to the regime will draw its strength from political acumen and the accumulation of military power, and from its success in attracting followers and undermining lawful authority. The six case studies have suggested that each component of this revolutionary triad has to be countered at its own level. Unless the propaganda component is countered effectively the revolutionary forces may grow in size and dedication, government prestige and confidence may fade, and neutrals may apply unwelcome pressures that influence the outcome. This is what happened in two cases, Palestine and Algeria, and it happened eventually when the forces set in motion by Pearse had completed his design. In two of these examples, Dublin 1916 and Palestine 1945-48, the British failed to mount any effective counter-propaganda. In the third, the French Army in Algeria dealt energetically and ably with the problem at the tactical level, but partly because their counter lacked political support and control, aspects of the campaign created a situation where strategic revolutionary propaganda undermined French domestic support and made world opinion critical of France's position.

The response of the Seljuk administration to the Assassins was the reverse of the French in Algeria. Here the tactical reply seems

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17. Camus, op cit, p 126.

to have been feeble, but the strategic threat was successfully held in check by a revival of faith amongst the people. The Provisional IRA succeeded in applying leverage against Britain, but because their political acumen was weak this pressure could not achieve their strategic aim. Interim aims were, however, accomplished by a mixture of violence and propaganda, against the second of which the British counter-measures were at best only partially successful, at least during the period studied. The Sultan's counter-propaganda was effective tactically as well as strategically, and his campaign of counter revolution suggests that the triad needs to be recognised and used by authority as well as rebels. One clear deduction may be drawn: unless governments are willing and able to counter propaganda, they expose themselves to dangers which political skills and military prowess cannot always overcome.

The reasons why individuals or governments fail to act wisely can seldom be uncovered. Often those concerned do not know the answer, and if they do they would rather not say. Short-term expedience and self-interest probably accounted for the weak Seljuk reaction to Assassin terror and tactical propaganda. If the true purpose and the extent of the threat had been recognised, and if the authorities had appreciated how, by bowing before it, they were enabling the Nizari Ismailis to remain in operation for so long, they might perhaps have stood firmer. The Maxwell administration in Dublin simply did not understand the power of public opinion, failed until it was too late to give this factor its proper measure of attention, and lacked the structure and skills necessary to mount an effective counter. The British administration in Palestine and the government at home seemed not to realise that Zionist appeals to world audiences and the leverage these generated might be the decisive weapons of that campaign. Nevertheless they were aware of the damage being done to Britain's reputation by this propaganda and their failure to counter it deserves study. The recent disbandment of the wartime apparatus may have been a factor, but since it was always within the power of government to use the departmental information staffs, augmented as necessary, this alone is an insufficient answer. Possibly it was the quasi-moral reluctance to use propaganda in peacetime at all that lay at the root of the trouble.

Finally it has to be considered whether in the circumstances the government doubted that its propaganda could ever be effective.

The last possibility opens a door to the interesting hypothesis that some counter-insurgency campaigns are fought in the face of such strong currents of history, and against moral forces of such power, that governments appreciate the impossibility of responding with credible or effective counter-propaganda, and abstain from the attempt. It may be seen as likely that, at least in some subconscious ways, this sense of facing impossible odds inhibited the British in Ireland in the years following Pearse's deed, in Palestine after World War II, and perhaps in Ulster in the aftermath of the civil rights campaign, and the French at government level over Algeria. We will return to this question shortly.

French governments prior to de Gaulle may have been victims of their own illusion that, since Algeria was a part of France, it was a purely domestic issue best dealt with by the army on the spot, and no proper concern of world opinion. The niceties of diplomacy inhibited their embassy officials and when eventually the need to respond effectively to international FLN propaganda became apparent, facts from Algeria created by security forces which had lacked proper political control destroyed the moral basis of France's argument. In Northern Ireland during the period studied government counter-measures were made difficult by the divided political control and the three-sided nature of the conflict. The importance of propaganda in that struggle came to be realised by governments and by security forces as time went by, but understanding of the problem did not, and perhaps could not, always lead to action to overcome it. Behind the several failures observed in this research, where governments have suffered on account of not countering revolutionary propaganda effectively, ignorance of the subject has lurked as a powerful factor, and it sometimes seems that ignorance has been cultivated.

Cases studied showed that of the three target audiences affected by rebel propaganda, 'friends', 'neutrals' and 'enemies', none is more important to both sides than the first, the loyal supporters of revolt or government around which the opposed leaders build their strength. Just as the revolution cannot get off the ground unless mobilisation is successful, so governments cannot hope to survive unless they

consolidate their domestic base. Appeals to the other two audiences are important, but they come later in order of importance, and often in time. The initiative in the early stages of rebellion is always with the rebels, as much in propaganda as action. Authority is therefore for the time-being on the defensive. The essential target to be defended is the loyalty of its supporters.

In those cases where government suffered from its failure to counter hostile propaganda it was apparent that an understanding of the power, role and workings of revolutionary appeals was needed by political leaders, officials and security forces. This was so not only because a response needs to be presented at government, police and military levels, but also because by their reactions each group is liable to provide revolutionaries with the facts so essential to their campaign. This aspect underlines the inter-relationship between politics, military action and propaganda, noted in the analysis of the revolutionary technique, which with equal force governs the effectiveness of any reply. It explains, too, why an understanding of propaganda needs to be part of the equipment of the top leaders, not just of their aides. Unless the makers of policy have a feel for the subject, advice from below is never likely to compensate for so serious a deficiency. A Maxwell with this understanding might have handled his difficult assignment well; the Maxwell of history seems hardly likely to have heeded the best possible psychological advice, even if it had been available. Nevertheless, leaders who understand may not always be experts in the art, and appropriate advisers are therefore necessary, in government, police and military, always assuming that it is the intention to resist this form of attack in kind.

The important position of the news media has already been noted. Authority has often tended to accuse this media of disloyalty when criticism was severe, sometimes in disregard of weaknesses in its own performance or in the presentation of that performance. This reaction usually makes matters worse. A better answer is to give the public opinion factor its due priority and handle each issue with care.

Propaganda's Reputation

If bias against propaganda is a powerful factor in any argument about counter-measures to revolutionary attacks, and it certainly seems

that it is, this bias deserves examination. Its origins were disclosed in the first chapter. We saw how the Allies in the 1914-1918 War made falsehood a regular feature of their propaganda, particularly to the home fronts. The totalitarian nature of full-scale propaganda has been observed. The incursions upon civil rights that censorship and any official interference with press freedom to interpret can involve are obvious. Furthermore where propaganda is active there are fears that the public is being psychologically manipulated, 'conned', by 'black' or 'grey' operations, by disinformation or what the Americans call 'dirty tricks', and by other irresistible forces under government control. The use of such methods by authoritarian regimes, particularly during the last fifty years, has tended to confirm in many liberal minds the notion that propaganda is an evil force and an unmentionable subject. The writer sympathises with the first contention but not the second.

It can be argued that propaganda is neither good nor evil, but a neutral weapon system that is as upright or as culpable as those who use it. There is truth in such a view, but in the case of total propaganda, even if the totality is confined to quite small groups, its totalitarian action may be seen as damaging regardless of whether the cause is worthy or not. For this reason propaganda in its full sense can be seen as an evil force, a weapon to be used by government only with great reluctance, if at all, in the direst national emergencies. This assessment will not, however, deter others from using propaganda, and the motive force of revolution that provides justification for any act, will certainly ensure that propaganda continues to be used by rebels. Therefore the subject cannot safely be regarded as unmentionable. It cannot be swept under the carpet without exposing society to grave risks. A population that pretends that propaganda does not exist or cannot influence its views is open to psychological attack. Where this attitude is shared by authority, the attack may go unopposed.

Defending the Liberal State

If a liberal democracy threatened by revolution can only defend itself by a combination of politics, security force measures and propaganda, the need for some form of government propaganda apparatus

seems inescapable. The problem is to find an appropriate response at this level which does not damage democratic values.

In place of the counter-terror that for centuries was the normal government answer to terrorism or revolt, liberal states have evolved doctrines of counter-insurgency in which security forces operate lawfully to restore order. A similar approach may be necessary in the case of propaganda, in the form of government 'counter-propaganda'. Within the limits of human nature, counter-propaganda would use only unimpeachable methods, and would reject 'grey' and 'black' operations, disinformation, untruth and, so far as possible, any interference with the media's access to information and right to interpret. In adopting counter-propaganda, government would reject propaganda per se with its overtones of manipulation, falsehood and guile. This nomenclature would enlist to authority's side those pre-existing attitudes in a liberal society that see propaganda as 'a bad thing'. Restriction on information would be necessary for security, and some prohibitions, legal or voluntary, might be needed to prevent rebel leaders from using the media as an outlet for violent appeals. Incitement to violence by any person might also have to be prohibited,[18] but so far as possible such restrictions should be kept to a minimum.

It may seem a contradiction in terms to discuss revolution within a truly liberal state, since the nature of the constitution should enable dissent to take peaceful forms. There are, however, such problems as minorities, whose aspirations may conflict with those of the majority and there are anti-democratic forces which seek to overthrow liberal governments for ideological reasons, and whose motivation cannot necessarily be disarmed by the opportunities for constitutional change. It is also a fact that liberal intentions do not always lead to wholly just and socially acceptable policies, so the seeds of unrest may be sown. In a divided world great powers are tempted to exploit for their own advantages internal problems in other countries, so small groups may receive the necessary finance, training and weapons to pose a threat to the state. It is unlikely

18. See Patricia M Leopold 'Incitement to Hatred - The History of a Controversial Criminal Offence' in Public Law (Oxford, Winter, 1977), pp 389-405. Miss Leopold explains the pitfalls of legislation in this area.

that such threats would reach dangerous proportions unless a mixture of maladministration and revolutionary pre-propaganda thriving upon it had alienated a sizeable section of the population. In considering methods of counter-propaganda, it is realistic to expect that this will often begin from a position of real or apparent moral weakness. The very fact that there is a rebellion brings the government's legitimacy into question. Where, as in Palestine and Northern Ireland, the government finds itself in one corner of a triangle, special problems affecting its counter-propaganda effectiveness are likely to arise.

Earlier in this chapter the possibility was raised that some counter-insurgency campaigns are fought in the face of such overwhelming historical and moral forces that government response in the propaganda field is thought to be impossible. How should such a situation be dealt with in future? Since it seems unwise to commit administrators and security forces to a counter-insurgency campaign without protection from the effects of revolutionary propaganda, the choice which ought surely to be faced is between disengagement and resistance of all three components of the attack. The British reaction in Palestine failed, in part at least, for want of counter-propaganda. If such a measure was indeed impossible in the circumstances then so, too, was the whole campaign, which ought perhaps to have been terminated earlier. Once France discovered that her Algerian policy could no longer be defended internationally, or even at home, an early withdrawal ought possibly to have been considered. These judgements are easily made with the benefit of hindsight and free of the political pressures active at the time. They are offered only as pointers towards a conclusion that prospects of success in countering revolutionary propaganda should be measured alongside expectations of controlling violence when governments decide whether and for how long they intend to resist a revolution. The rational options are to resist on all fronts or not at all.

Counter-Propaganda

Professor Jacques Ellul concluded his study of modern propaganda with this advice:

> The only truly serious attitude - serious because the danger of man's destruction by propaganda is serious, serious because no other attitude is truly responsible and serious - is to show people the extreme effectiveness of the weapon used against them, to rouse them to defend themselves by making them aware of their frailty and their vulnerability, instead of soothing them with the worst illus ion, that of a security that neither man's nature nor the techniques of propaganda permit him to possess. 19

Ellul was referring to dangers that he sees as arising from the technological society. Nevertheless his words have relevance to this study. Not only are we vulnerable on account of our ignorance, but official attitudes and public bias in many liberal democracies tend towards a will-to-ignorance. An educative effort has therefore first to overcome this barrier. Although success in the Ellul formula of mass understanding is to be hoped for, within the needs of countering revolutionary propaganda, education of key individuals may be a sufficient start. These include political leaders in and out of government, senior officials concerned with defence, domestic administration, communications and central policy, police and military at all levels, but particularly at and near the top, and, so far as possible, members of the news media.

Education needs the backing of thorough research, which in itself can stimulate interest through seminars, publications and discussion. Police and armed forces academies and staff colleges should study the subject, and after-action reports should include analysis of the propaganda component. Politicians, civil servants and members of the media could be invited to attend staff college or ministerially-sponsored study periods or 'war games'. It should be policy that all these activities be exposed to the public. The subject has to come out from under the carpet. Propaganda may continue to be a 'dirty word', but we must cease being frightened of it.

Counter-propaganda staffs may be needed in government, police and military. Like all aspects of counter-insurgency, the twin controlling influences would be the law and government policy. The three staffs might share services such as monitoring, analysis, information storage,

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19. Ellul, (i), p 257.

research and so on, but each would concentrate its attention on the problems specific to politics, police work or the military, and be ready to give advice to planners and commanders within its own sphere of interest. Chiefs of counter-propaganda would exercise control over all public information activities, including the information or public relations staffs. Countering propaganda calls ideally for the type of mind described in this quotation:

> He must understand symbols and speak in words. He must contemplate the particular in terms of the general, and touch abstract and concrete in the same flight of thought. He must study the present in the light of the past for the purposes of the future. No part of man's nature or his institutions must be entirely outside his regard. [20]

Methods

Counter-propaganda is concerned with public attitudes. It seeks to turn 'enemies' away from their mistaken revolutionary loyalty and back to their proper allegiance; it works to retain the support, understanding and commitment of 'friends'; it tries to enlist domestic 'neutrals' into the government camp and to convince overseas 'neutrals' that it is authority and not the rebels that deserves their sympathy and assistance.

The traditional public relations function has been summarised as the effective presentation of a good story to achieve public recognition. This research has shown that unless the public opinion factor is considered at all levels, and at the outset of planning, there may not be a good story to tell. It also shows that when effective hostile propaganda is active, authority's normal presentational methods may be, as it were, shouted down by the revolutionary opposition. The information or public relations staffs are always likely to play the biggest part in countering propaganda, but to be effective under difficult conditions they need to operate as part of a co-ordinated counter-propaganda effort. The counter-propaganda staff must participate

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20. J M Keynes 'Alfred Marshall, 1842-1924' in Memorials of Alfred Marshall (Edited A C Pigon) (New York, 1956), p 12.

in policy-making, the provision of advice in operational planning, surveillance and analysis of revolutionary propaganda, long-term forecasting, the educational function and liaison.

The head of counter-propaganda advises his minister, chief constable or general-officer-commanding on the threat from hostile propaganda, its apparent aims and methods, and on possible ways of countering it. Often the greatest service that this staff officer can perform is to persuade his superior of the dangers inherent in those proposed courses of action which seem likely to play directly into the hands of the revolutionary propagandist - over-reaction, measures of dubious legal or moral standing, short-term operations that may leave long-lasting embarrassment, or concessions to revolutionary demands that may transfer legitimacy without compensating advantage to authority. The political, police or military commander will have to weigh this advice against the often conflicting requirements of politics and security, and sometimes he will have to risk a setback on the psychological front in order to retain a sufficient measure of control in other areas. Properly advised, he will at least make the decision in the light of all the factors. Furthermore, by foreseeing difficulties on the public opinion front, he can order forward planning to minimise them.

This function is also undertaken by the head of counter-propaganda, this time in conjunction with the staff officers responsible for intelligence, operations and planning. The proper briefing of all those taking part in some potentially controversial operation, and the making of appropriate arrangements through the information staffs for press briefings, facilities and so on, can ensure that the reasons for the measure are fully explained and that no acts of stupidity or malevolence provide gratuitous ammunition to the other side. The dynamics of counter-insurgency almost certainly throw up material that any competent revolutionary can turn into propaganda: foresight and planning can, however, reduce this to a minimum and soften its impact on public opinion.

Analysis of hostile propaganda requires close co-operation from the intelligence staffs, who can provide the fragments of evidence that combine to form the pattern of revolutionary themes as well as the details essential to an effective reply. Counter-propaganda staffs

should also guide intelligence operators away from types of secret operations that easily rebound to disadvantage. Where there are complaints and enquiries, these should be handled in as speedy, fair and public a manner as possible. Staffs do a service if they press for such arrangements to be agreed in advance of any controversial incident.

In considering counters to the themes of revolutionary propaganda, authority must be guided by social and other circumstances, pre-existing trends, and the attitudes of the people who compose the various target audiences. The government's first and most important task in this endeavour is to analyse the first revolutionary theme, that of righteousness, which expresses in propaganda terms the root cause of the rebellion. A response may reject outright the rebel argument and seek to counter it by exposing its shallowness; or it may be based mainly on social, economic or other reforms, combined with publicity to show that the call to revolt is unjustified because the government and not the rebel leadership provides for the people's needs. Any response must be carefully thought through and must not be fashioned for short-term convenience. Concessions can easily transfer legitimacy, and if made in the face of threats they may strengthen rebel credibility too. Nevertheless proper reforms should not be postponed simply because a minority are disturbing the peace. Government policy in the face of a revolutionary threat should be clearly stated. Authoritative statements made at the highest level provide points of reference essential for effective counter-propaganda.

Ministerial statements are valuable means of countering other rebel themes. They carry weight and are certain to be fully reported by the news media. Speeches in parliament or before other audiences allow the counter-insurgency strategy to be explained, and help the public to understand that the succession of 'news stories' are part of a necessarily long-term policy. Revolutionary motives in discrediting security force methods, individuals or units, and in demanding 'special status' for convicted activists, can best be exposed by spokesmen removed from the sound and fury of the actual operation. Senior officials and security leaders may give press conferences to answer questions on matters within their jurisdiction,

which if well done lend credibility to the government's policy. Here, too, propaganda attacks can sometimes be dealt with, and it is often more effective to expose hostile motives than to answer specific allegations. Details are best handled at news desk level.

The revolutionary propaganda attack can be blunted if understanding of methods and aims is widespread and if the public is wary of this component of revolt. The news media has tended in the past to shy away from this matter, aware perhaps that their own role is inevitably closely entwined. It is still desirable that journalists should address the subject, but other groups that may be usefully involved include institutes of defence study and academics.

Authority's own case can also be publicised through all the normal outlets, such as posters, television advertisement, newspaper announcements, handbills and, where appropriate, loudspeakers, in much the same way that governments have compaigned against smoking and drugs. The need to tailor such appeals to the consumers is obvious. But however effective those methods may be, public attitudes are likely to be influenced more by the news media, particularly television, than by any other source. This is where the media's interpretative role is so important. The success or failure of rebel themes will depend to a large extent upon each journalist's presentation of the facts. It is in this area that the information staffs play their important part in countering hostile themes.

The work of information staffs is the subject of further research.[21] In outline their role is to provide accurate information quickly, so that journalists can make their reports and form their opinions in the light of all the facts, not just those selected truths or biased interpretations that may be offered by revolutionary spokesmen. In controversial situations the evidence of an eye witness is often conclusive, and the information staffs should when appropriate make this available. They also provide background briefs and briefings, which add the necessary up-to-date detail to the major policy statements of ministers or high officials. These staffs depend upon all concerned in the security operation for a rapid and completely

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21. By Major R A Hooper, Royal Marines, in the Department of Politics, University of Exeter, 1978-79.

accurate supply of information, and this in turn hinges upon an understanding of the importance of this service at all levels, achieved by the educative function of the counter-propaganda staffs. The information staffs should not be drawn into speculation when briefing the media, nor should they attempt to 'slant' the facts in an effort to affect the interpretative process. They must provide information that is disagreeable to authority just as freely as that which is welcome. Just as the public and media are entitled to a totally different standard of behaviour by their security forces from that expected from insurgents, so they are entitled to complete honesty from information staffs.

The government's counter to the first rebel theme - righteousness - has already been discussed. Appropriate replies to the other themes will vary according to circumstances and there can be no counsel of perfection. Some ideas are set out below as examples of possible replies. In almost every case the method of answering consists of a combination of appropriate actions by government and its servants, the efficient provision of accurate facts which demonstrate those actions, and by the necessary explanations of government strategy and rebel motives provided by speeches, publicity and briefings.

Although the term 'enemies' has for convenience been used throughout this thesis, it could be misleading if it caused us to lose sight of the fact that those who support the rebels are as much a part of the nation as other citizens, and will still be there when the violence has passed. Counter-propaganda must avoid divisiveness and aim instead to rehabilitate. Whilst it may be necessary to condemn rebel leaders, discredit should not be heaped upon the rank and file, their families and friends, or the front spokesmen who preach on their behalf. The government should discredit the rebel cause and its organisational base, violence, and false arguments and justifications, thus directing its counter-propaganda mainly against ideas and actions, rather than against people. Amnesty offers can sometimes help, subject to legal considerations and to their not strengthening the rebel theme of 'security'. Financial inducements seem to work in some circumstances but not in others. Both should be considered. A rebel who has changed his allegiance is better than one who is in prison, plotting the next uprising, or one who is dead, a martyr for another generation to emulate.

By focusing its attacks on ideas and actions, instead of against people, a government may also be better able to deal with a three-sided situation like Palestine or Northern Ireland, since such attacks cannot be denounced as partial.

Counters to Hostile Themes

Theme 2: 'Hatred'. In so far as government forces refrain from creating facts indicating oppression, this theme becomes harder for rebels to project. By showing the tragic results of revolutionary violence, counter-propaganda can slowly turn this theme inwards on its originators, and against violence per se.

Theme 3: 'Inevitable Triumph'. Arrests or deaths of insurgents, and other security force successes can be publicised to turn this theme on its head.

Theme 4: 'Allegiance'. This theme is used by the rebels inside their organised group. Initially little can be done to counter it, but as disillusion begins to grow the proposal may be attacked indirectly through families, church, etc. The idea that members have been 'conned' by selfish, cynical revolutionary leaders might be launched. Defectors spread their doubts. Amnesty offers and financial temptations can sometimes break shaky allegiances. Eventually, an alternative focus of loyalty may be offered.

Theme 5: 'Moral Certainty'. Activists must if possible be denied the sure belief that they are on firm moral ground. If journalists refrain from describing rebels as 'freedom fighters', or 'guerrilla soldiers' and their acts as 'daring attacks' or 'shootings', and if the full facts of terrorism are exposed, some of the certainty may weaken. Rebels have to be seen by the public as criminals guilty of morally indefensible acts, and in time the public's judgement may undermine the moral certainty of activists themselves.

Theme 6: 'Terror'. So long as rebel warnings and threats are credible, that is to say while disobedience or defiance results in swift and terrifying rebel punishment, the theme of terror is likely to be effective. Therefore it cannot be countered by words alone. Security forces have to gain ascendancy over rebel activists, denying them the opportunities to intimidate and punish, before this theme loses its

power. The hardest target audience for authority to reach is the group that surrounds the insurgents. To free themselves from terror, they have to renounce the activists in their midsts. Such a change of heart may result from the combined effect of counter-propaganda dealing with all the rebel themes. This would be a culminating point of government success.

Theme 7: 'Glorification of Heroes'. This theme can be weakened if the appearance, demeanour and statements of authority and security forces eschew pomp, arrogance, complacency and signs of overbearing power in favour of quiet efficiency, concern, firm but lawful determination and shows of such strength as is necessary and no more. Police and soldiers should be hard-worked or out of sight. Displays of affluence by state servants are to be avoided. Police and troops should be seen as the hard-pressed protectors of the threatened people: the rebels are unlikely to be seen as heroes if this is the case.

Theme 8: 'In Praise of Violence'. Cults of violence have thrived in supposedly religious and humanistic societies in spite of apparent contradictions. They should, nevertheless, be attacked on moral grounds by clerics and laymen, and any tendency to see such cults in heroic and glamourous terms should be countered by exposure of the horror and personal tragedy involved.

Theme 9: 'Justified Reaction'. Assuming that security force actions have been in response to terrorism or revolt, and are always lawful and restrained (an ideal and perhaps rare situation), the flaw in this theme should be exposed and the motives of spokesmen challenged.

Theme 10: 'Long War'. Counter-insurgency operations can be likened to the war against crime, which no policeman expects to 'win', but which can be controlled indefinitely. Rebels may come to see time as their enemy.

Theme 11: 'Guilt'. The theme is directed against the government's supporters, and it is towards these 'friends' that a counter must be addressed. Guilt over past neglect or maladministration can be lessened by emphasising reforms already made, benefits given, and the opportunity for constitutional action provided by a liberal nation. False allegations and the resurrection of ancient bones of contention

can be exposed as artificial incitement. A useful answer may be to take the offensive by condemning acts of violence as representing the most fundamental violation of human rights imaginable.[22] 'Friends' who are indignant are unlikely to feel guilty.

Theme 12: 'Bad Faith'. If government launches projects designed to buy off the rebel supporters, or acts out of insincere motive, this theme will deserve to work. Sincere acts and a lively awareness of real community needs can lessen its effect. Appeals must by-pass the rebel leadership and go direct to the people. However, organisation and discipline constitute a formidable barrier.

Theme 13: 'Security Force Incompetence'. Over-confident statements and claims can strengthen this rebel theme, being 'sent up' by some action. Evidence in the form of convictions and an improved security situation are the best defence. These, in their way, 'send up' the theme.

Theme 14: 'Legitimacy'. The government transfers legitimacy to the rebels if it loses prestige, uses illegal or morally unsound methods, backs down in the face of threats, speaks of the insurrection as though it were a state of war, vacillates in its policy, permits the violent organisation to set up 'political wings' to operate 'above ground' or negotiates with revolutionary leaders while violence continues. It strengthens its own legitimacy by dealing with the situation as nearly as possible by routine methods and by insisting that crimes must be detected and punished regardless of any 'political' motive. Authority needs to pay particular attention to countering rebel claims to legitimacy to overseas 'neutral' audiences.

Theme 15: 'Credibility'. Where the rebel claim to credibility is false or magnified, it should be cut down to size by exposure of the rebel organisation's weakness and limited support. If the claims have accumulated strength through security force inability to control a deteriorating situation, attempts by authority to deny what is obvious may only make matters worse. The answer must lie in recovering

22. When in July 1972 the Provisional IRA murdered eleven people in a carefully co-ordinated bomb attack in Belfast, the media dubbed the event 'Bloody Friday'. Erstwhile IRA supporters condemned the action and the guilt theme was transferred.

the initiative in the physical arena. Counter-propaganda can assist by pointing to the dangers, and thus preparing the government's supporters for sacrifices and tougher measures.

Theme 16: 'Counter-Productivity'. Foresight and planning can often provide full justification and explanation of security force methods to pre-empt this theme. When individuals, units or methods are attacked simply because they are hindering rebel actions, the true motives of such attacks should be exposed.

Theme 17: 'Special Status'. It is necessary to explain to'friends' and 'neutrals' that the plea for special status has no merit, since the convicted men are ordinary criminals and not'political prisoners' or 'prisoners-of-war', and to go on to expose the motive of the theme which is to remove the fear of long sentences from the minds of activists, and thus prolong the violence.

Theme 18: 'Security'. If theme 17 is correctly answered, this will deprive rebels of hope of early release if convicted. Their sense of security can be further undermined by government refusals to yield to blackmail in the form of hostage-taking, etc, designed to achieve release by coercion. Rebels who have lost hope of escaping justice can have their morale lowered another degree by being made to doubt that death in the cause really amounts to martyrdom. This aspect needs gentle handling, but if the community begins to feel that those who die are the dupes of cynical leaders who prefer not to take risks themselves, the glory may fade.

Themes 19 and 20: 'Cost and Futility' and 'Climate of Collapse'. These defeatist appeals need to be challenged should they surface, and those who promote them may be asked to consider the full consequences of what they are proposing - surrender. Neither theme is potent unless the revolutionaries have achieved a dominant position.

Limits and Dangers

The limit of the effectiveness of all counter-insurgency methods is marked by the incidence of successful revolutions. Countering propaganda is seldom likely to be easy, and efforts in this direction

are no more certain of success than political endeavours to prevent rebellion or security force attempts to suppress violence.

When counter-propaganda has been successful a risk may arise of authority using the advantages so gained to defer political decisions, or even trying to make counter-propaganda into a substitute for political action. Any instrument can be misused, and if through the use of counter-propaganda the disaffected felt that they had no effective means of communication other than violence, the misuse might become perilous.

It could also be dangerous to imagine that revolutionary propaganda can be analysed and treated like an allergy and that thereafter it will present no threat. Like other weapon systems it retains a number of constant characteristics but its techniques and tactics will be revised in the light of government defences. The discrediting of official counter-measures is likely to be one new tactic, while the increased use of fronts and a greater measure of sophistication and subtlety may distinguish technical innovation. The element of surprise poses dangers in all forms of conflict and may be exploited by revolutionary propagandists through such means as 'disinformation'. Modern technology may enable insurgents to 'capture' a communication satellite by replacing the intended signals with their own, and to deceive a mass audience as to the true source of messages. Study of psychology may allow rebels to find new and effective ways of exploiting social, economic and other grievances that seem to exist in every society, however liberal its character or well-meaning its government. Successful defence must depend upon vigilance, foresight and capacity to respond and, more than anything else, upon a widespread understanding of this subject.

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